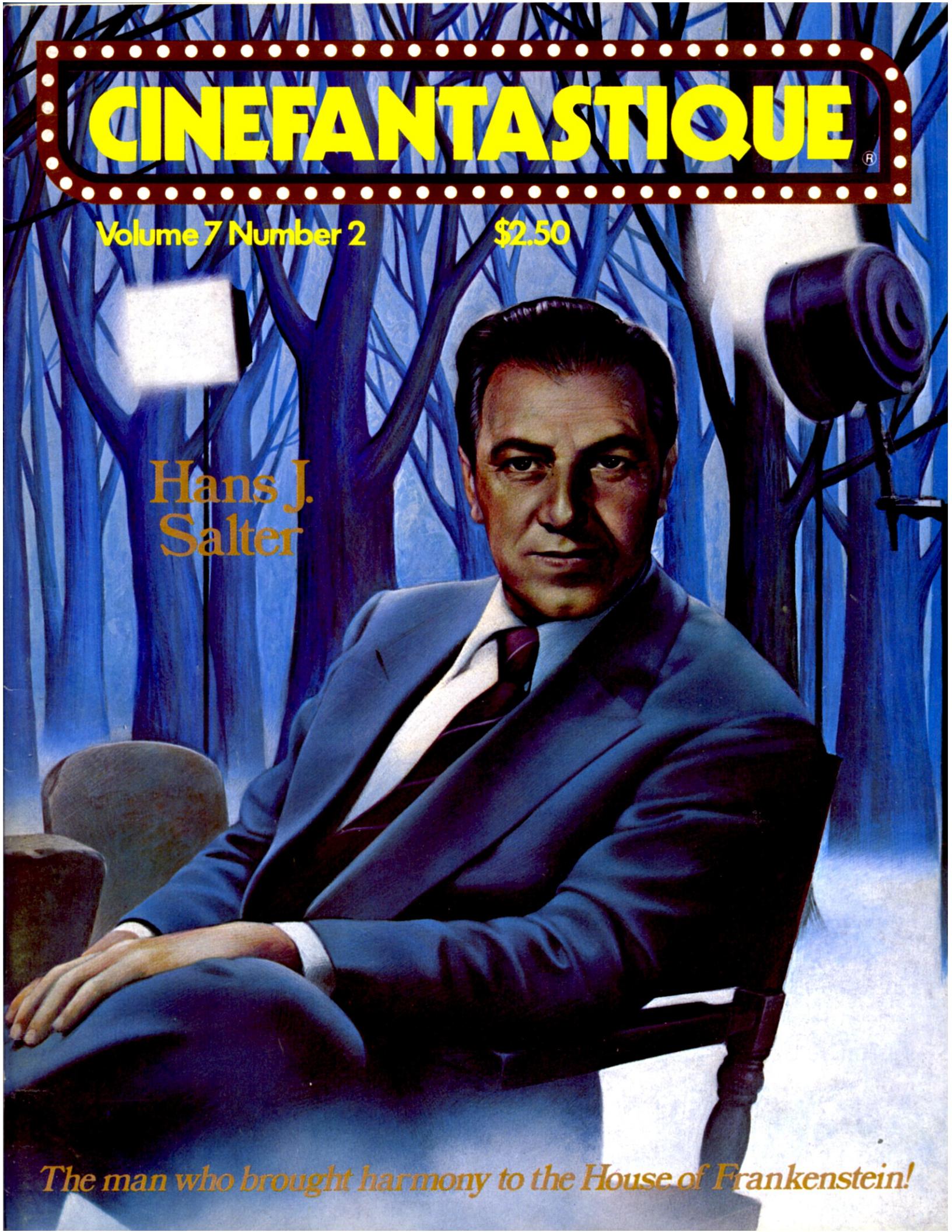


CINEFANTASTIQUE

Volume 7 Number 2

\$2.50

Hans J.
Salter



The man who brought harmony to the House of Frankenstein!

Making CE3K

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND



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Dan Scapperotti (New York)
Don Shay (Los Angeles)

CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Patrick Carducci
William S. Garland
David Hutchison
Sam L. Irvin, Jr.
Alan Jones
Preston Neal Jones
Bill Kelley
Paul Mandell
Dave Schow
Roger Stine
S. S. Wilson
Tim Wohlgemuth

Background: Boris Karloff and Donnie Dunagan in SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939), Hans J. Salter's first horror film assignment at Universal. Salter orchestrated the score composed by Frank Skinner.

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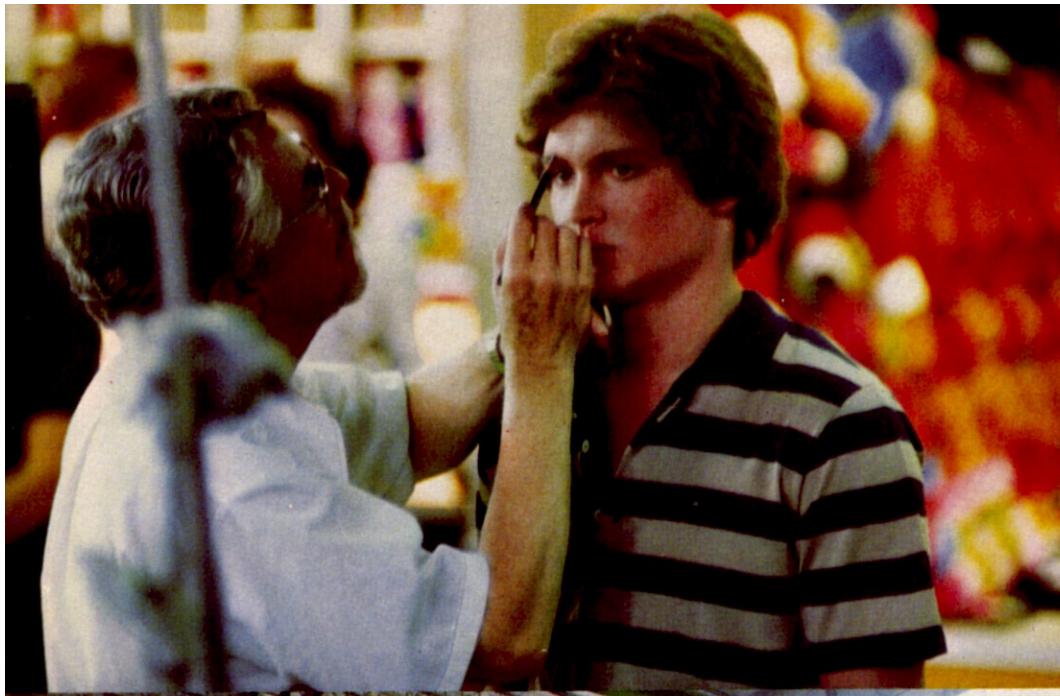
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VOLUME 7

NUMBER 2



With Brian De Palma's permission, I went to Chicago in August 1977 to spend eight days observing the location shooting of his new thriller *THE FURY*, a Frank Yablans Presentation for 20th Century-Fox, now in release. Budgetted at \$6 million, shooting began July 28th in Chicago for twenty-five days.

The John Farris screenplay, based on his own novel, is a suspenseful mixture of espionage and the supernatural. A teenage girl, Gillian Bellaver (Amy Irving of *CARRIE* fame), and a boy, Robin Sandza (Andrew Stevens, son of actress Stella), are telepathic. They also, as in De Palma's *CARRIE*, possess psychokinesis, the ability to move objects with the mind.

Tuesday, 16 August 1977

After sixteen days of shooting, the sequences on the streets of Chicago are nearly completed. For the next four days, the John Brooke estate in posh Forest Hills will be used to portray the home of Childress, played by John Cassavetes.

De Palma formidably arrives in a chauffeured car. He is dressed in blue jeans and wears a khaki-colored safari jacket with large, filled pockets. He gets a cup of coffee and speaks to no one, obviously preferring to be left alone. Several people try to spark idle conversation with the director only to get polite but short answers like "Yes" or "No." Someone who has worked with De Palma before confides, "He is always an ogre when he's shooting a picture. He immerses himself into his work and refuses to acknowledge anything extraneous."

His relationship with the crew is strictly on a professional basis. However, as the day progresses, I notice that he does warm up to his actors, putting them at ease for their scenes. He also exhibits a close rapport with producer Frank Yablans. Considering the pressures of any motion picture production, his focussed attitude is a necessity.

Yablans, on the other hand, keeps the crew happy with conversation, jokes, and a "one big happy family" atmosphere. He is a creative producer, involved at all times with the artistic end of the production, sometimes directing a second unit. Talking

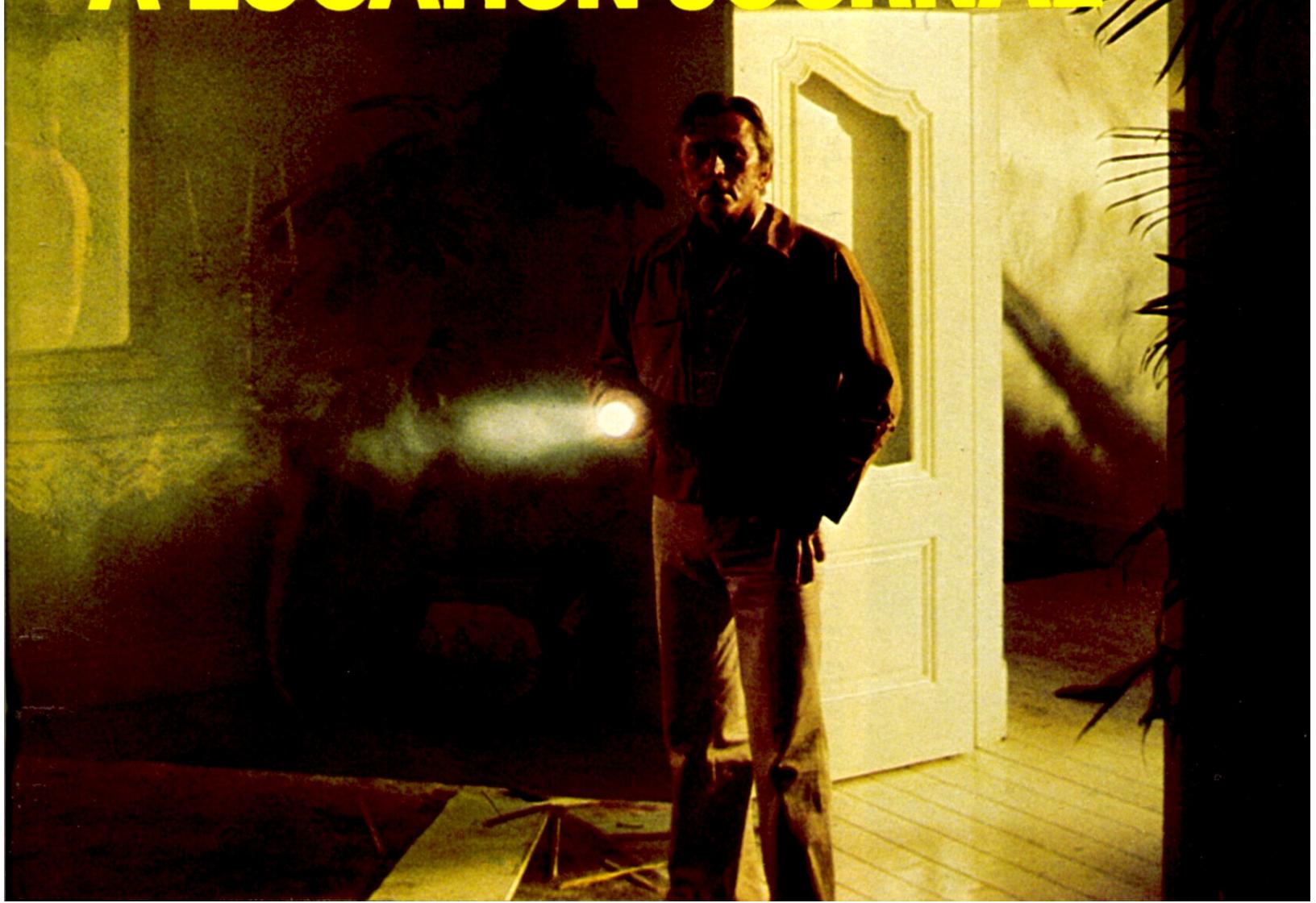
Right: The climax of *THE FURY*, filmed at 20th Century-Fox Studios in Hollywood. Robin (Andrew Stevens) levitates into hiding as his father (Kirk Douglas) searches for him. Left: Filming *THE FURY* on location in Chicago. Top: Make-up artist William Tuttle puts the final touches on Andrew Stevens' pulsating forehead veins. Middle: At "Old Chicago" amusement park, effects technicians prepare for the scene where the carnival ride crashes through a restaurant window. Six cameras record the scene from inside the restaurant at angles such that the constructed track for the ride will not be visible. Bottom: At the John Brooke estate director Brian De Palma discusses shooting with producer Frank Yablans.

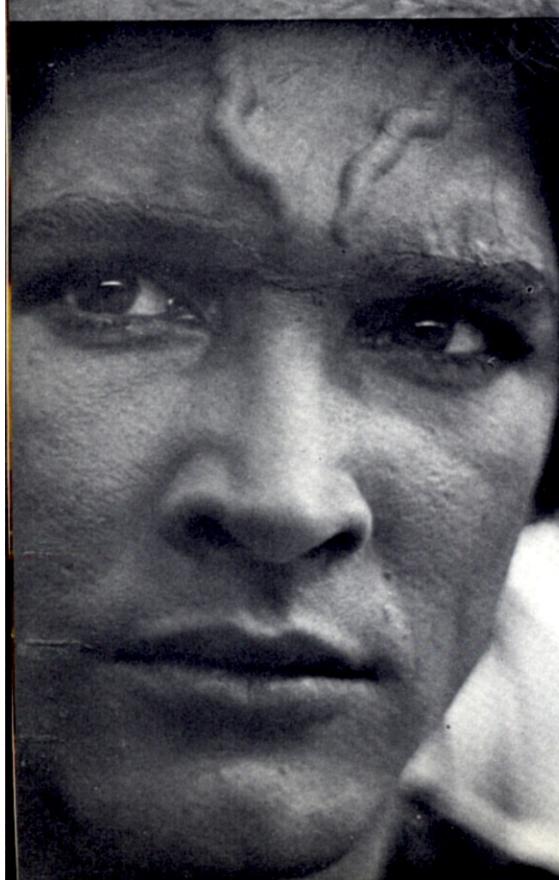
Sam L. Irvin, Jr. is a free-lance writer and film critic, formerly the editor and publisher of *Bizarre*. His interview with director Brian De Palma on filming *THE FURY*, and article on its special effects, will appear in a future issue.

by Sam L. Irvin, Jr.

THE FURY

A LOCATION JOURNAL





briefly with him I learn that he financed two of De Palma's early films, *GREETINGS* and *HI MOM*, while working at Sigma III. Later he became president of Paramount Pictures in the early '70s, and has since resigned to form his own production company. Yablans first read *The Fury* in manuscript form, prior to publication, in March 1976. A literary agent showed it to him and he immediately bought the screen rights for his newly formed Frank Yablans Presentations.

I ask Yablans if he feels the release of *THE OMEN PART II* so shortly after the release of *THE FURY* will hurt the grosses of either picture, since both are supernatural thrillers dealing with young people? "These two films are not related at all. *THE OMEN PART II* is a story of the occult and ours is a story dealing with parapsychology and governments. I see no conflict."

Dialogue scenes are shot over and over to provide all of the various masters, close-ups, reverses, reactions, and dolly shots necessary to the later editing of the picture. De Palma has each angle sketched out on cardboard like comic strip panels. It is obvious that he has gone over these blueprints with cinematographer Richard Kline; only once did I see De Palma look through the lens to check a shot. Kline never refers to the sketches before setting up each angle. Everything is calculated and smooth—seemingly rehearsed.

A master shot is delayed because the prop department failed to bring the large foam cushion required for pole-vaulting. In no time the pad arrives by helicopter, symbolizing the unlimited resources that a major production is able to summon forth.

John Cassavetes and Fiona Lewis are having a bit of trouble with their lines, which is odd since De Palma rehearses all his actors prior to shooting. I discover, however, that the dialogue has recently been rewritten, and correction sheets were not distributed until today. Cassavetes has a great sense of humor, and between shots he plays games with the crew and tells jokes—in sharp contrast to his ruthless role in the movie. Today is Lewis' first on *THE FURY* and she seems reserved and is concerned about her appearance before the camera.

For the pole-vaulting in the distance, stunt man Mickey Gilbert stands-in for 22-year-old Andrew Stevens. As Stevens waits to do the close-ups, I talk to him. His screen debut was in *SHAMPOO* followed by *VIGILANTE FORCE*, *LAS VEGAS LADY* (with his mother), *MASSACRE AT CENTRAL HIGH*, and *DAY OF THE ANIMALS*. He appeared with Amy Irving in the novel for television *ONCE AN EAGLE*. He is very proud of his performance in Sidney J. Furie's *BOYS IN COMPANY C*.

I ask how he landed his part in *THE*

Top: Andrew Stevens demonstrates his pulsating forehead veins with a hand pump (right hand). The pump is connected to an air tube which goes up his back, through his hair, and down his forehead under the latex appliance. Middle: Stevens uses his powers to explode the light bulbs on the carnival ride to his left. In the background, a group of spectators watch. Four cameras are rolling simultaneously. Bottom: The vein makeup during application by William Tuttle. At this point the line of the rubber appliance is still visible across the eyebrows. The makeup was designed by Dick Smith.

*FURY: "Fiona and I read together and Brian worked with us for a couple of hours and dismissed us. Brian wanted to see us again, so we went back. Brian was concerned that Fiona and I were not familiar enough with the parts. We were reading the last sequence which is the tremendous climax of everything and he wanted us to know exactly where these characters had come from to get to that point. We went through the other scenes. We improvised a scene which Brian later incorporated into the script. We spent hours and hours. Finally he said, 'Okay, I bet you both are tired.' We cried, 'Yes!' Then Brian said, 'Well, then let's go through the last sequence.' I said, 'Oh no!' Fiona said, 'Oh God, Brian!' He said, 'I would like you to try it.' So we did. We started this last sequence and all of a sudden, pow! Everything clicked and it was dynamite—exactly what it should have been. It came from all that prior work that he had done with us. It felt wonderful and he had taken us there through this whole series of exercises. I got the offer for *THE FURY* a few days later and accepted."*

As the sun begins to set there is an unexpected drizzle, and the camera is quickly moved in for the close-up of Stevens' pole-vaulting. A platform is rigged slightly below the crossbar. The scene calls for him to knock off the bar and fall to the cushion directly in front of the low-angle camera. In order to perfect this shot, De Palma demanded twenty-one takes.

Wednesday, 17 August 1977

Today's call is 4:00 PM for dusk and night shooting. We ride out to a secluded beach on Lake Michigan in Forest Hills. A second unit directed by John Fox has spent the afternoon getting aerial shots of a boat sequence involving Peter and Gillian. Stand-ins were used for Douglas and Irving. Now De Palma is doing the earthbound angles with the real actors. The scene has Peter and Gillian in a high speed motorboat searching for Childress' hideout. Gillian uses her telepathic powers as a homing device. She concentrates on the wooded coastline and suddenly pinpoints the location. Peter turns the boat shoreward; they land on the beach, and head into the woods. (This sequence ended up on the editor's floor.)

Lucy Salenger, of the Illinois Office of Motion Picture and TV Services, pays a visit. She is having a very busy year, arranging locations for *A PIECE OF THE ACTION*, Robert Altman's *A WEDDING*, *THE FURY*, and several others. She revealed that the John Brooke house used in this film had originally been obtained for *THE OMEN PART II* which began shooting in Chicago in October. Photos of the estate fell into the hands of De Palma and Yablans and arrangements were made to switch. It is also interesting to note that *THE OMEN PART II* will likewise have sequences shot in Israel. It's almost as if Fox got a location package deal on both films.

As night falls, we all move back to the house. The freakish cold spell has definitely set in—and I am caught in my shirt-sleeves; the rest of the crew is as ill prepared. Wardrobe provides some coats and sweaters; William Tuttle loans me one of his jackets. De Palma puts on a flowing robe made for the Arabs in the film.

For tonight's sequence, extensive tracks

are laid to carry the camera a quarter of a mile to cover the scenes involving Peter and Gillian running around the yard. Several men push the camera at high speed; Douglas and Irving run as fast as they can, keeping parallel to the viewfinder. De Palma runs out-of-frame in front of the actors. Since the grass is soaked, I have visions of the director slipping and messing up the take, but luck prevails.

One very impressive shot has Douglas and Irving running directly in front of the house as searchlights snap on one after the other, eventually lighting up the whole yard as if it were high noon. Running for cover, they find two guards with dogs coming after them. They flee in the opposite direction. All of this action is covered in one continuous tracking shot that had me on the edge of my imaginary theater seat. I could almost hear a driving John Williams score pounding away to the beat of the running feet. The camera seemed more like a rollercoaster zooming around the track.

Thursday, 18 August 1977

I meet Fiona Lewis for cocktails and lunch. What strikes me most about Lewis is her wonderful sense of humor—she is totally crazy and a delight to be around. The reserved mood she displayed on Tuesday was not indicative of the real Fiona Lewis. John Cassavetes agreed: "When I saw Fiona at rehearsals I thought that she was quiet, sedate, demure. Little did I know what a character she would turn out to be." She lives with comedian Buck Henry which could explain some of her insanity.

She refers to her nude spread in *Playboy* (in connection with her role in LISZTOMANIA) with rolled back eyes. "I love Ken Russell, but perhaps the *Playboy* stuff was beyond the call of duty." Of all her films, she enjoyed making DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN the most. We exchange stories about Bob Fuest who directed the film. "Bob and I got along very well because he is completely mad. A genius, though highly underrated and underworked." I ask her about Roman Polanski (she had a small role in THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS). "Roman is a dear friend of mine and I would stand up in court to testify about his good character. I just cannot understand this mess with the young girl."

At the climax of THE FURY, the script calls for Lewis to go through much abuse via dazzling special effects. She said, "I am not sure I am looking forward to shooting those scenes. Luckily a dummy, other than myself, will be used in certain shots. They have already made it. For three days, four hour sessions each day, I had my entire body cast by the special effects people. They cast my arms, then my legs, then my body; I wore a bathing suit, of course—they didn't need an exact replica of everything! They did my head and put it all together. It was really weird. You cannot imagine what it is like to walk into a room and see yourself hanging on a hook."

After lunch, I buy a sweater in preparation for the cold evening, and I return William Tuttle's coat which I borrowed last night. I ask Tuttle why three make-up artists were contracted for THE FURY: "Each one of us has sort of a specialty. Rick Baker is doing the bleeding hand, Cas-

Top: At the Brooke Estate, Brian De Palma waits for a new camera set-up. Middle: De Palma checks-out the camera set-up for an establishing shot of the grounds. De Palma only rarely looked through the camera. Bottom: De Palma directs Fiona Lewis in a scene with John Cassavetes.

savetes' head and dummy, and Fiona's body. Dick Smith has designed the pulsating veins for the forehead, a scratch across the face, a bleeding nose, a scar. But Dick Smith could only serve as a consultant because he is working on another picture. He came in before the picture started shooting and worked out all these special effects, made them, and then left to fulfill his other commitment. So, I was called in to cover everything during the shooting. I am applying Dick's designs, and when I run into technical difficulties, I come up with something on my own that will be effective. A. D. Flowers is also working on the picture; he is doing the rotating, the spinning of Fiona, all the explosions, fire, levitations and all." Dick Smith later had his name taken off the picture.

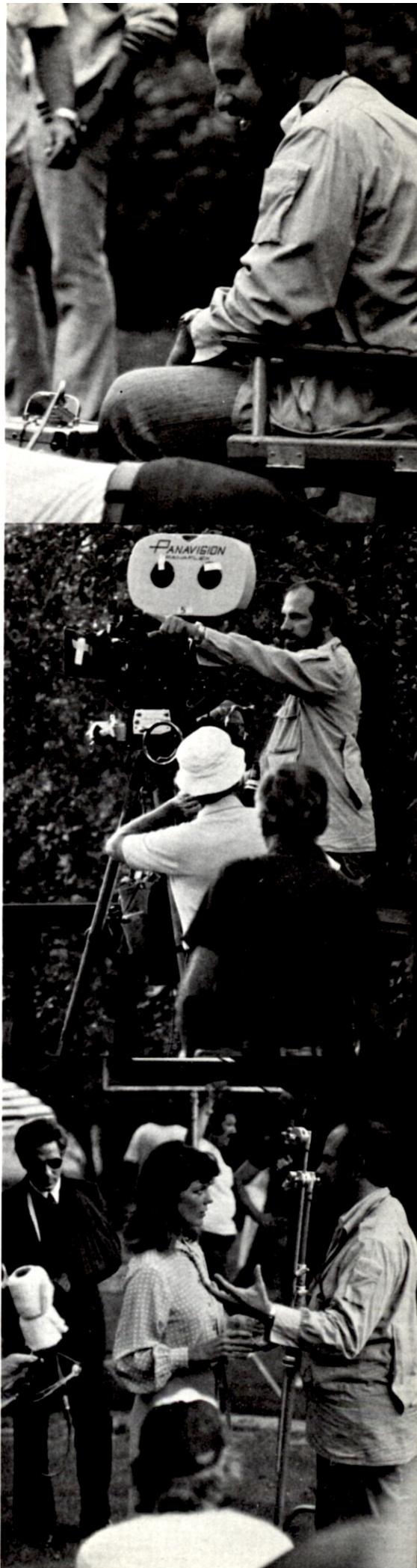
I catch a couple of winks before reporting for departure from the hotel at 6:30 PM with the crew. We're back at the John Brooke home again for several sequences relating to the climax involving Cassavetes, Douglas and Irving. In one scene, Irving comes screaming out of the house onto the terrace. De Palma wants this shot from four separate angles, each requiring multiple takes. After all is done, Irving has practically lost her voice. For another sequence, stuntman Mickey Gilbert falls from the roof of the house. Dozens of empty cardboard boxes are stacked up cushioning the fall.

During a long interim, I talk with John Cassavetes inside one of the Winnebagos. He has recently finished his newest film, OPENING NIGHT, which he wrote and directed, starring himself and his wife Gena Rowlands. During our conversation, he said, "The only reason I act in other people's movies is to get money to finance my own." I ask what he thinks about his character in the book and the script of THE FURY: "Childress in the book was just a buffoon. There was nothing about his character that commanded any authority. Just some screaming little queen who cries when he doesn't get his way. How can a man that weak and snivelling be in such a high position of power, and even if he could get to that position, how could he manage to maintain it? Childress [the name was shortened for the film] in the script is much more calculating and commanding. I think the script is much better than the book."

Fiona Lewis and Andrew Stevens converge on us and we all have some champagne, on the pretense that it will warm us up. Back at the house, shooting for tonight is completed as the sun begins to rise.

Friday, 19 August 1977

On the twentieth day of shooting, the call is 5:00 PM for the final sequences to be shot at the John Brooke estate. Tonight the living room, adjacent to the terrace, is being utilized for interior shooting. Irving, Cassavetes and Douglas are involved. Childress, sitting calmly in his house, has Peter and Gillian apprehended and brought to him. In the course of a brief dialogue about





Robin, Peter loses his temper and tries to claw at Childress but is restrained by guards. When Douglas leaps across the coffee table, the glass was removed so if Douglas had slipped, there would have been no danger of broken glass. The magazines and accessories were balanced on the frame of the table.

During one of the breaks between takes Kirk Douglas invites me to talk in one of the Winnebagos. He recently finished a film in Italy called HOLOCAUST 2000 co-starring Simon Ward. The film has been acquired by American International Pictures for release in the United States as THE CHOSEN. Douglas said, "I wasn't going to do anything but THE FURY this year, but I got this great science fiction script which I really liked. The producers were high on having me in it, so we worked out a schedule that finished HOLOCAUST 2000 just in time for me to step into THE FURY."

What's Kirk doing next? "Burt Lancaster and I are planning to do a Broadway play in which we will be Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn as grown men—what happened to them and all. I think it's a marvelous idea, and I hope it works out."

Douglas constantly amazes everybody with his energy and professionalism. He is game to do anything, and is forever suggesting how to make things better or more efficient.

Saturday, 20 August 1977

The various unions involved in motion picture production require at least twelve hours off between calls. Today's sequence takes place at noon, but because of the aforementioned regulation, the crew cannot meet until 6:30 PM for the shooting. It is going to be another all-nighter, but they will be shooting night for day. The location is an interior at the Sacred Heart School in Chicago. The scene takes place in the cafeteria involving Irving, Melody Thomas as Larue, Hilary Thompson as Cheryl, and dozens of female extras as schoolmates. White paper and bright lights are rigged outside the windows to simulate daytime.

Cheryl taunts Gillian about her rumored telepathic powers (reminiscent of Chris in CARRIE). Larue tries to stop the confrontation, but before long Gillian loses control of her powers and Cheryl begins bleeding from the nose. Horrified at what she has done, Gillian runs from the room. This sequence is shot from many different angles but the actual bleeding is saved until last. There is a buzz in the air. Everyone seems particularly exhilarated, maybe because of the new location, but most likely due to the anticipation of the special effects of the nosebleed.

Filming goes on all night. It is nearly 5:00 AM. All the extras have been released, grumbling that they weren't allowed to stay and watch the nosebleed. As the final shot is being set up, the crew is getting restless and De Palma is clearly exhausted—circles under his eyes, etc. Hilary Thompson is off in the makeup trailer being rigged for bleeding by William Tuttle. Frank Yablans

is getting impatient: "What the hell is taking Bill so long?!"

The effect requires blood (Karo syrup, red coloring) to travel through a tube that runs under Thompson's clothes, up her neck, through her hair, into the arm and rim of her glasses, down into a latex shell covering her nose, finally emptying into her nostrils. Irving will only be seen from behind in this last shot—an over-the-shoulder point of view.

Fiona Lewis arrives: "I just didn't want to miss the scene—besides everything in Chicago is closed at this hour." After smuggling booze onto the set, Lewis persuades Irving that there is no further need to be in top form: "All the camera will see is the back of your head." In no time, Irving is feeling great. She rushes to the unmanned camera and whirls it around in the direction of De Palma, who is having his 800th cup of coffee. "Lights! Camera! Action!"

Lewis joins with the clapper board nearly chopping De Palma's nose off. "Do that to Hilary and we won't have to fake her nosebleed." Irving maniacally cranks the tilt and zoom levers at a dizzying pace. "Emote, Brian! Come on! This is your big break!" Yablans gets the boom microphone and lowers it right between De Palma's eyes. "Isn't that a bit low, Frank?"

"No, we'll just say it's a phallic symbol." De Palma's exhaustion reaches the brink and he begins to laugh hysterically. Irving is riding that camera dolly like a jockey at the Kentucky Derby while Lewis threatens to have De Palma blacklisted: "You'll never act again! Go to your room!"

The crew is doubled over by this time and no one would ever guess this is the set for a thriller. Finally, Thompson is ready. Everyone holds their breath. The camera rolls. Tuttle, under the table, squirts the red mixture through the tube with a syringe-like device. Blood gushes forth from Thompson's nostrils as panic sweeps across her face. Irving screams and everyone's eyes widen—it is a true moment of horror. "Cut and print!" The crew explodes with cheers and applause. Thompson is cleaned up for a second and final take. Again, the effect works like magic, and the night's shooting is wrapped at 7:00 AM Sunday morning. We get a day of rest, the next call isn't until Monday morning, 6:00 AM.

Monday, 22 August 1977

For the next three days, the location is "Old Chicago," a tremendous indoor amusement park that is nearly two square blocks. The perimeter of the mammoth building is a shopping mall, enclosing the ride area. Several hundred people are employed as extras at \$5.00 an hour—including myself.

Today's shooting includes an elaborate establishing shot. High on a crane, De Palma and Kline man the camera (a precarious altitude which Hitchcock would never have dared himself). As a ride elevates and tilts, the nearby crane slowly lowers the camera, converging on a crowd that includes the group of Arabs—a shot similar to the opening of the Prom sequence in CARRIE. The third assistant director Roy Peterson, in charge of "atmosphere," tells me to walk next to the arabs. All the extras are told, of course, never to look at the camera. Crowd scene after crowd scene is shot until we finally wrap around 5:00 PM.

Top: Childress (John Cassavetes) suffers the psychic onslaught of Gillian at the conclusion of THE FURY. Bottom: Susan Charles (Fiona Lewis) is subjected to Robin's psychokinetic powers. A dummy fabricated by Rick Baker was used for this sequence.

Tuesday, 23 August 1977

Today's call is 5:00 AM. As requested, I wear the same clothes as yesterday for continuity. Andrew Stevens is being rigged to have throbbing veins in his forehead. These are made with air tubes under a thin latex coating. The vessels lead through his hair, down his arm and finally to his hand. A bulb-shaped air pump may be squeezed, causing the veins to swell and contract.

Three sequences of bursting light bulbs are shot, each time in a different area of the park. Four cameras are set up for each of these stunts to record all the angles in one take; it would be too costly to rig the bulbs more than once. The extras are told to react with horror as the glass and electrical sparks fly. The logistics of these sequences are very complex, resulting in numerous dry runs. During rehearsals, the extras mingle, Stevens walks by the grouping of bulbs, and De Palma shouts "Pow! Pow! Pow!" The extras are supposed to flex at the instant of the explosion, but Stevens is to remain oblivious to the noise. Also the extras are carefully positioned so Stevens and the lights are in clear view of the cameras.

Then comes the spectacular stunt of "The Paratrooper" ride crashing into The Beer Garden. A replica of one of the cars is set on a track aimed at the restaurant window. Ropes from the ride lead through a pulley system to a truck, which on cue zooms forward, causing the ride to catapult through the window and across the restaurant floor. Several stunt persons are strategically placed at the tables near the window. Six cameras are set up inside of the restaurant. Their shooting angles do not cover the tracks, thus it is possible to create the illusion that the ride is flying wild as it careens toward the window. Two dummies in Arab garb replace the actors for the stunt. After hours of preparation and anticipation, all six cameras are ordered to roll and De Palma shouts, "Action!" Wide-eyed and speechless, the crew and onlookers gape as the spectacle unfolds. In a shower of broken glass, the ride bursts its way into the room. The extras leap to safety as it skids across the floor, crushing everything in its path. "Cut and print," comes the order from De Palma followed by an instant of breathless, reverent silence. Then a thunderous round of applause and cheers ensues. This incredible day of special effects turned out to be the most exciting, not to mention the longest—they didn't wrap until 10:00 PM.

Wednesday, 24 August 1977

Today brief scenes between Susan and Robin in the shopping mall section of "Old Chicago" are shot with loads of extras. During a break I talk to Yablans, and learn that his next film project will be THE DEMOLISHED MAN, which Brian De Palma will direct. "When we get a screenplay that we are happy with, we will make it in 1978 for 20th Century-Fox." After a short, light day, shooting is completed late in the afternoon. Tomorrow is the last day of shooting in Chicago, after which the crew flies to Los Angeles, and reports bright and early Monday morning to Stage 14 at 20th Century-Fox Studios for two more months of shooting, followed by a week in Israel, for the sequence of Robin's abduction. □

THE GHOST OF HANS J. SALTER

Beginning in the 1940s, rival studios would send for prints of Universal's horror films so that they could study one element which helped make pictures like THE WOLF MAN, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and SON OF DRACULA so successful. Which contribution did these studios most want to analyze and emulate? Was it Jack Pierce's monstrous makeup? The convincing performances of Boris Karloff and Lon Chaney? The imaginative direction of Robert Siodmak and Roy William Neill? The colorful scripts? The eerie settings? The atmospheric photography? Each of these factors had its indispensable place in the creation of Universal's product. But the reason so many studios wanted to view these champion horror movies was so that they could study one unique ingredient of Universal's magic recipe: the musical scores of Hans J. Salter.

Salter has written hundreds of scores for every type of movie—drama, comedy, swashbuckler, western, musical, mystery, historical epic—and he has been nominated six times for an Academy Award. Yet it is the opinion of many, including this writer, that Salter's masterwork is his contribution to the sagas of the Universal bogey men. When Lon Chaney breaks through his straps in THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN and lunges for Cedric Hardwicke, Salter's orchestral decension down the tonal scale evokes a brutal inevitability which seems to propel the Monster's attack. When a condemned Chaney walks the last mile as the MAN-MADE MONSTER, Salter creates a touching funeral march for the procession. The composer achieves a similarly telling effect in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN as the villagers carry the dead girl through the street, a march scored subtly and poignantly by Salter within a mere forty-five seconds of screen time. Earlier in that same picture, as the moonlight creeps through the hospital window toward Larry Talbot's bed, the unsettling weavings in Salter's score convey the dark mystery of this seemingly ordinary occurrence. And when Chaney, as Talbot, sees the moonlight and turns his face away, Salter's string section tells us all we need to know of Tal-

The man who brought harmony to the House of Frankenstein

Preston Jones is Associate Creative Director, Advertising and Promotion, for Columbia Pictures Television International. His forthcoming book, *P.O.V. Shot: The Movie Crew*, published by Peace Press, contains additional Salter material.

Interview by Preston Neal Jones



Hans J. Salter circa 1940s.

bot's torment. But Salter brings the same skill to scenes requiring a lighter touch, from the definitive "old-spooky-house" music in Abbott and Costello's HOLD THAT GHOST to the scherzo that enriches the scene of Chaney playing with his dog in MAN-MADE MONSTER. Along with the actor and the director, Salter is the third force in providing characterization, from the eerie shepherd's horn theme for Bela Lugosi's Ygor in THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, to the tender violin solos for Elena Verdugo's gipsy girl in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, to the melancholy themes that haunt Lon Chaney in all of the Wolf Man films, an elegy, not for the dead, but for one who wishes that he were dead.

These movies were made in the years before sound track record albums became an important part of the musical marketplace, and in recent years Universal has joined in the barbaric Hollywood practice of throwing written scores into the junk-heap to make room for new files. For the time being, therefore, the only way the public can enjoy this music is by hearing it on the Late, Late Show, mixed in with the dialogue and sound effects. A small portion of Salter's fantasy music survives in the archives of a northwestern university, where may be found sheet music from such later productions as THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN and THIS ISLAND, EARTH, plus one precious relic from the golden years: an old sixteen inch record which the composer has labelled "The Ghost of Hans J. Salter," containing selections from THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, including a few themes originally used in THE WOLF MAN and MAN-MADE MONSTER.

Born in Vienna in 1896, Salter had conducted in opera houses and silent movie palaces—including performances of Fritz Lang's WOMAN IN THE MOON—before writing music for early talkies at the famous U.F.A. Studios in Berlin. The coming of Hitler led to an exodus which eventually brought Salter to Hollywood in the late 1930s. The chance to score one scene in THE RAGE OF PARIS

Scoring Salter's "Horror Rhapsody", artwork by William S. Garland. Logo by David Ludwig.





Salter conducts at UFA in the thirties.

(1938) led to a career at Universal, though his chores during the first few years included not only composing but also scrutinizing the play-back synchronization of Deanna Durbin musicals and orchestrating the scores of other composers, such as Frank Skinner. Both composers are given co-screen-credit for *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS* (1940), and *MAN-MADE MONSTER* (1941). The battle of Hollywood composers for artistic and financial recognition has always been an uphill struggle, and neither Salter nor Skinner received official screen credit for their contribution to the landmark score in 1941's *THE WOLF MAN*. Although the hectic deadlines at Universal's film factory sometimes necessitated the assistance of such fellow composers as Skinner and Paul Dessau, Hans J. Salter was the creator of most of the music for Universal's horror classics of the '40s.

My first meeting with Mr. Salter is arranged to take place at an outdoor restaurant on Sunset Boulevard. For the two and a half months that I have been in Hollywood, not a drop of rain has interrupted the warm, eternal sunshine for which the town is famous. But as I approach the rendezvous with Mr. Salter, the air is for the first time cooled and darkened by forbidding clouds. I am beginning to wonder

whether the composer is bringing with him the sinister weather that always hovered over the graveyards, castles and forests at Universal, when I catch sight of Mr. Salter himself, smiling in greeting, sunshine incarnate.

He is a pro. He is quietly proud of the genuine accomplishments of his long career, yet he clearly has a sense for the humorous side of his years at Universal. Although his life's work has been spent in shaping the medium of sound, he makes no sound when he laughs. While his vocal chords remain silent, his head nods, his eyes become cheery crescents and his smile beams fully. During the course of our lunch, his talk drifts to the early days at Universal, and he finds it hard to keep a straight face when discussing the distinction he has earned as composer for their horror films.

"Do you know what they used to call me in those days?" asks Mr. Salter, starting to laugh. "'The Master of Terror and Suspense!' Pretty good? They couldn't understand how a nice, mild-mannered fellow from Vienna could develop such a sense of horror and mayhem. You know, I still get letters from people asking about those scores. This is very surprising, this renewed interest in the scores of the '40s. Why is it?"

I suggest that very few present-day films offer scores of the same type or quality.

"In those days," says Mr. Salter, "we had no idea we were writing for 'eternity.' We were just trying to keep up with the frantic pace of picture after picture. Let's say it was a Monday, the producer showed you his picture. You had to write a score, and orchestrate it, and be ready to rehearse and record with the orchestra on the following Monday. It was like a factory, where you'd have to produce a certain amount of red socks, a certain amount of green socks... They'd screen one of those pictures for us without the music, and it would be *nothing*. All the pictures we saved for them! But those executives, they never knew what they had. We never heard a word from them. They were afraid if they gave us a compliment we'd ask for a raise."

A week later, amid the fall of leaves, I carry my tape recorders up the driveway of Mr. Salter's home, not far from the studio where he worked for more than a quarter of a century. Mr. Salter shows me to his study and, as I prepare the equipment for our interview, I look around. Here is the piano on which Mr. Salter wrote much of his music. And over there are some of the fruits of his labors: two shelves full of bound conductor's scores, including *IN-*

VISIBLE AGENT, *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Just beneath a row of Academy Award Nomination certificates is a set of sound equipment, upon which Mr. Salter has prepared a surprise. Without saying anything, he pushes a button, a tape starts turning, and the wall speakers fill the room with the mournful music of men singing in a strange language. One word, however, turns out to be recognizable: "Ananka." It is the ancient funeral chant of the slaves who buried Princess Ananka in *THE MUMMY'S HAND*. Mr. Salter lets the tape play a few more minutes and I recognize themes from *MAN-MADE MONSTER*, *BLACK FRIDAY* and the mounting brass crescendo with which Lou Costello discovered, in *HOLD THAT GHOST*, that his bedroom had been suddenly changed into a gambling casino. We have been listening, Mr. Salter explains as he stops the tape, to a few minutes from "The Salter Rhapsody," the only other surviving recording from his horror movie era.

About those movies, Mr. Salter expresses mixed feelings. He has said that the music was usually on a much higher level than the pictures, yet he will say at one point in the interview that the horror films will probably outlast most of the other movies to which he contributed. When I ask him to name his own favorite Salter scores, he names such pictures as *BEND OF THE RIVER*, a James Stewart western directed by Anthony Mann, *THUNDER ON THE HILL*, a Claudette Colbert mystery directed by Douglas Sirk, and, especially, *THE MAGNIFICENT DOLL*, an historical drama with Ginger Rogers and David Niven, directed by Frank Borzage.

I notice you haven't mentioned any of the horror pictures.

Those horror pictures were a big challenge to me. When they presented those pictures to me in the projection room, there was nothing there, just a bunch of disjointed scenes that had no cohesion and didn't scare anybody. You had to create with the music all the horror, all the tension that was "in between the lines" and didn't come off on screen. And that was such a tremendous challenge that these pictures interested me, and I developed a very refined technique for this type of picture. But, as far as giving me a personal thrill, I can't say that they did. [Salter smiles.] Sorry to disappoint you.

You had no special affinity for the fantastic subject matter in the horror films?

I must have had, because I mastered it in a short time. The musical devices at my command were evidently right at the right



time and the right spot. And I know, whenever a picture of this type was done at another studio, they always ran for their composers one of my pictures, to show them how to treat it.

In some of the horror films there were moments which could have been used in a "straight" dramatic picture, such as the last-mile walk in MAN-MADE MONSTER, or the more melancholy passages in THE WOLF MAN. Would you, perhaps, have felt as moved by these as you were by some of your "straight" scores?

My basic approach to pictures is always the same. I ask myself, "What did the director want to tell the audience with this scene? Where does the picture, or the scene need help?" Very often, I've told producers that they *didn't* need music for this scene, and they disagreed with me violently. There was a producer, who shall remain nameless, who showed me his picture,

PHANTOM LADY [A Cornell Woolrich mystery with Franchot Tone and Ella Raines.], directed by Robert Siodmak, and he said that he wanted a lot of music in it. I told him, "All you need is a main and end title. The picture plays just the way it is. You'll have a big success." He argued that they needed a lot of help with this scene, and this, and this. . . I said, "Well, you're the boss, so I will write it, but it's just a waste of money, because in the dubbing room [where dialogue, music and sound effects are blended into the final sound track], you'll take out all this music." Okay, I wrote it, and, as I predicted, in the dubbing room, he took out the music for first this scene, then this, then this. . . The picture went out with just the main and end title. Half a year goes by, and the same producer has another Siodmak picture, UNCLE HARRY. [A murder-suspense story with George Sanders.] He says, "In this

picture, we won't need any music. I've already used up the music budget for other things, bigger sets, better actors, and so on." He shows me the picture, and it was a real lemon. And I told him, "Sorry to contradict you, but this picture needs an awful lot of help." He said, "You are really crazy! One time, you tell me I don't need any music, now you tell me I need a lot of music! You're wrong, and I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll take it out to a preview with just main and end title music, and then we'll release it that way." So they took the picture out for a preview that way and it must have laid a big egg because the next morning the producer called me and said, "I need a hundred percent score!" He had to go to the front office on his hands and knees and beg for money for the music budget. I gave the picture, I would say, at least sixty percent music. The producer saw his picture and it was like—[Salter

GRAVEYARD—The opening music from the first scene in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN was one of Salter's most atmospheric creations, and one which made many felicitous reappearances in such subsequent Universal thrillers as SON OF DRACULA, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and others. (© 1943 Universal Music Corp.)

Top Left: Salter on screen. The composer, in his UFA days, conducts the orchestra in a sequence from the Emil Jannings picture, FAVORITE OF THE GODS.

Above: When Lon Chaney Jr. inherited the Karloff monster role in THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942), Bela Lugosi repeated his Igor role from SON OF FRANKENSTEIN, but this time with a new shepherd's horn theme by Salter.



Salter's colleague, the late Frank Skinner.

raises his hands and eyebrows in wonder—he was so amazed. That's the way it went out.

When we first met, you were talking about the frantic, assembly-line pace at Universal. Did you, like most film composers, have to use an orchestrator to meet those deadlines?

Yes, whenever there was no time for orchestrating it myself. I started out as an orchestrator for Frank Skinner. I orchestrated for him one of those early Frankenstein pictures, *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*. I remember, there was one stretch, pretty close to the recording date, where we didn't leave the studio for forty-eight or fifty hours. He would sit at the piano and compose a sequence, and then he would hand it to me. I would orchestrate it and he would take a nap on the couch in the meantime. Then, when I was through orchestrating, I would wake him up, and he had to go back and write another sequence while I would take a nap. And this went on for forty-eight hours or so, so that he could make the recording date.

That was one of Skinner's finest scores. Was it written in just those couple of days?

No, no, not a couple of days. But I don't think we had more than maybe two weeks to write the whole thing. There was always a release date staring us in the face,

and my friend, Charlie Previn, who was the head of the music department, would aggravate the situation by saying, "They want this picture on Thursday. Let's show 'em! We'll give it to them on Wednesday!" He was a bachelor, and he couldn't understand how some of us with wives and families might actually have some kind of a life away from the studio. He was a charming fellow, and I was very fond of him, but sometimes he just drove us nuts with these things.

TOWER OF LONDON was also released in 1939, had Rathbone and Karloff, as Richard III and his executioner, supported by the same music as in *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

I remember *TOWER OF LONDON* very well. What we tried to do there was to record music of that period, Dowland and other early English composers' music, without regard to the scene, just for sort of a mood. And we used harpsichord, and flutes and *viola da gambas*—all those old instruments. But when we went to the preview with this, it didn't work out. The executives were somehow startled. They didn't like it. They couldn't make heads or tails out of that sound. I think I had orchestrated some of that old music for strings and harpsichord, and I think I wrote a few sequences, too, in that style. It was a good idea, but it didn't work. So, after the preview, all this music was replaced by some other music, and some of it was from *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

You, yourself, would sometimes re-use parts of your scores in other films.

It was a matter of necessity, sometimes. When we were behind the eight-ball with these recording dates and there wasn't time to write a completely new score, I would use bits and pieces of scores written by myself or my colleagues for other pictures. Charlie Previn called this process "Salterizing." I would try to create something that would be on an equal footing with a complete new score. And I'm sure that ninety percent of the people didn't know the difference.

At the factory that was Universal, did you have any voice in choosing which pictures would be assigned to you?

They made, in those days, an average of about seventy-five pictures a year. So, you can divide two men into seventy-five, and what do you arrive at? In those days, everybody had to work on practically every picture. And the credits rarely reflected the whole story.

In *TOWER OF LONDON*, Previn is credited with the score and Skinner receives credit for "Orchestrations," even though most of the music was his. And Previn receives the only music credit on *THE*

WOLF MAN.

Once in a while, Previn wrote a sequence, too. He had that ambition to keep his hand in the pie. [Universal no longer has any of the written score from *THE WOLF MAN*, but a list of that film's music cues gives credit to Salter, Skinner, and Previn, sometimes individually, sometimes collectively.]

Just how would you and Skinner collaborate on such a score?

We would split it up. Let's say, I would tell Frank, "I'm going to write this theme, and this theme, and this theme, and you write this theme, and this theme." And then we would exchange them, and use them as close as possible to their original form, and that would give the whole score a certain cohesion. We each tried to write in a style that was not too far apart.

*How would you decide on that style? *THE WOLF MAN* is a film score very much of-a-piece.*

This can only be described in musical terms. We would stay within the bounds of tonality, so to speak, and not try to write anything too complicated which would stick out like a sore thumb. And, since we thought along more or less the same lines, musically... Maybe I was a little ahead of him in certain respects.

Such as...?

Maybe in harmony, or in melodic development. If I held myself back a little, and he progressed a little, then we would meet somewhere in the middle. Frank Skinner was a real pal. He was such a wonderful fellow, so dependable. I don't think they make them any more like they did in those days, because Frank was, in many ways, a self-taught man. When I came to Universal in 1937, he was actually just learning the trade, so to speak. He had been a dance arranger before that. He came out of a dance band himself. I think he was a trombone player. How he adapted himself, with this limited knowledge, to write music for films, and to see how he grew with every assignment was wonderful to watch.

You say one of your first Universal jobs was orchestrating his music?

Yes, and then later on he orchestrated some of my music when it was necessary. When I first met him, he was not very talkative. He must have had some kind of inhibitions. He didn't open up easily to another person. But once you were his friend, you couldn't ask for a better friend than he was. He was very warm. He had a certain aura about him that was really wonderful. He would do some sequences in pictures when I couldn't get through in time. Frank Skinner was always there to the rescue, like the Marines.

Did he ever tell you what he considered



his finest score?

No, I can't remember that he ever did. There were some pictures that he was fond of. [Salter smiles] But the Frankenstein pictures were not among them.

Many people regard *THE WOLF MAN* as a milestone score, and yet, neither you nor Skinner had any special feeling for it at the time...?

No. I don't think anybody who created the basic material for a film like this, not even writers or directors, had that feeling at the time. Only time can tell if it has any lasting value. And I, personally, think that the horror films of that period will survive everything else. It's such a valid piece of Americana that it'll overshadow, not the westerns, but all the romantic comedies, the adventure stories, and so on. And this will survive into the twenty-first century, more than anything else. Because, it was such a unique piece of work that couldn't be duplicated, no matter how hard they

try. And it has retained its flavor to such a degree that, in spite of dated costumes and dated style, it still remains a valid piece of work. And, it was such a good wedding between music and story and direction. I think film music, *per se*, is an art form, and the horror picture, *per se*, is an art form, and the wedding of these two elements created something unique.

There is much music in your scores which is complete in itself. In MAN-MADE MONSTER, Lon Chaney plays with his dog and there's a delightful scherzo with a beginning, a middle, and an end...

I always tried to do that, write set-pieces that made sense within themselves, if the scene required it. It was always my endeavor to write music that made sense as music and, within the flow of the music, to accentuate certain aspects of the film. But generally speaking, it's the wedding between the picture and the music that gives it that unique value. In picking my

favorites from among my own scores, however, I can only judge by the way the music affected me while I was recording it on the stage. Some of the scores are just more or less a routine job, although I am happy they work out the way I had planned. But at other times the music affects me very deeply, and it gives me an exhilarating thrill, something that you can't get with any other endeavor. The laws that govern the flow of a scene, visually, and the laws that govern music, aurally, are diametrically opposed, and to bring these two disciplines in unison is not easy. Sometimes it made me cry, to see how well the music fitted the scene, how much it did for the scene or lifted the picture to some new heights that it didn't have before. I just couldn't believe it. Maybe other people were not affected the same way, but for me as the creator to see how all the musical devices I planned worked out to such perfection and improved what they had on

SET-PIECE—Here are the first few bars from the scherzo Salter composed to accompany the first scene in which Dan (Lon Chaney Jr.) plays with the dog Corky in *MAN-MADE MONSTER*. This same theme, so light-hearted here, is used with much poignancy during the last two sequences of the picture. (©1941 Universal Music Corp.)

Top Left: The late Frank Skinner, the third member of THE WOLF MAN triumvirate who, like Salter, distinguished himself with such solo efforts in the horror genre as SON OF FRANKENSTEIN and ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN.

Above: In HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944), Salter's music helped Dracula (John Carradine) paint a seductive portrait of a world beyond to the Burgomeister's daughter-in-law (Ann Gwynn), one of eternal life without "material" needs.



Charles Previn, Henry Koster, Hans J. Salter.

the screen was a very big thrill. It's a unique feeling to get back what you have put in. Even in the horror scores, some of the sequences affected me deeply.

In looking through your copy of the HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN score, I find a section which must have been written for Boris Karloff and J. Carroll Naish's stormy exodus from prison, called here "The Gruesome Twosome Escape." That certainly indicates a less than reverent attitude...

[Salter smiles] Yes, that was a great hobby of mine, developing those titles.*

I notice, just before that sequence, a short section by yourself and Frank Skinner called "Lightening Strikes." And I see you share writing credit on many selections with "P. Desau." Who was he?

*It was a hobby shared by Mr. Salter's colleagues. Selections in Frank Skinner's score for ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN include such titles as: "Franken Skinner's Monster," "Out-Monstered," and "Dracula Hits the Jackpot." Long before PETER GUNN, Henry Mancini's titles for THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON include "Something's Fishy" and "Who's Stalking Who?" Heinz (THE INVISIBLE MAN) Roemheld contributed to THE MOLE PEOPLE such punning pieces as "Nasty Crack," "Hello Statue," and "Sandy Claws!"

Paul Desau, a very talented man. It was one of those cases where there was very little time, and I needed some help to meet the recording date, so I called on him. He worked very fast and very well. I knew him from Berlin. He's a well-known opera composer now, in East Germany.

Did you work with him in the same manner as with Skinner on THE WOLF MAN?

It was similar. I would lay out themes for certain situations and certain characters in the film, and we would both use the same themes, only develop them differently. I discussed every sequence with him, how I would have done it, and then left it up to him to use his own musical language. But still, it created a certain unity and cohesion in the score, and it sounded like one composer. If you organize it right, and work it out, then it's bound to culminate in a good score.

On a film like HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN or THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, did you work with director Erle C. Kenton or with his producer?

With Kenton, Kenton was a routine director. He was nothing particular. He was very matter of fact, and he left everything musical up to me. He had no opinion.

How about his HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN producer, Paul Malvern?

He was the same kind of fellow, sort of a minus-B producer, you know? This was just a routine job for them. I don't think they had any particular love or feeling for these fantasies they were making. They trusted me and I was pretty much on my own.

How about director Roy William Neill?

Neill? He did most of those Sherlock Holmes pictures, and FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN. He impressed me at that time as a better grade director. But I don't recall that he expressed any likes or dislikes. He accepted pretty much what I gave him.

Did a fellow like Erle C. Kenton ever thank you for what you had done?

Oh, yes. And George Wagner, director of THE WOLF MAN, he appreciated it very much. I think he wrote the lyrics for that "Faro-La, Faro-Li," the song in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN. [Producer-director Wagner did indeed write lyrics for Universal, but studio records reveal that Curt Siodmak, author of the screenplay, wrote the lyrics in this film. Incidentally, a 78 rpm recording of this musical number still exists in Mr. Salter's private collection.]

Yes, that's the villager's song about

death and eternal life which so upsets Larry Talbot. Was that actor singing to a play-back of his own voice or someone else's?

Oh, that was his own voice. I can't remember that actor's name, but he was making several movies in those days. He was a very pleasant fellow. He was a Russian gipsy by heritage, and when we pre-recorded this song he just ate it up. He loved doing it.

Do you have any recollection of Rowland V. Lee, producer-director of SON OF FRANKENSTEIN and TOWER OF LONDON?

Very charming fellow. A typical yankee. He embodied the best things in America. He had a wonderful sense of humor, and a wonderful outlook on life which was very heartening. While we were working on his pictures, Frank and I sometimes had lunch with him in the commissary, and he was always a lot of fun.

Fritz Lang's SCARLET STREET isn't one of his fantasies, but it was a bizarre murder story. Was that your first association with Lang since conducting a score for him in the silent days?

Yes, and we became very friendly again. As a matter of fact, even long after the picture was finished, we used to eat lunch together in his office. He brought his lunch and I brought mine, and then he gave me half of his and I gave him half of mine, and it was a surprise every day, what we would bring. He told me a lot about his early days, and about some pet projects of his that he couldn't get anybody interested in producing. He was a very sophisticated, very intelligent fellow, and he had a strong feel for music in making pictures. Lang was basically an artist. He'd wanted to become a painter, originally, and then later he got into films. But he had the eye of a painter, and also a certain affinity for all other arts through that. So, you could talk to him in artistic terms and he understood what you were trying to do. And I can see how some people might find him hard to get along with, but he certainly has made his mark on the history of film.

Did you find him hard to get along with?

No, not the least bit. The only disagreement we had—not exactly disagreement—was a long discussion about the ending of SCARLET STREET. It was one of the first films in those days that ended downbeat.

The film has a haunting ending, with Edward G. Robinson trudging off into the snow, haunted by the voices of Joan Bennett and Dan Duryea, the people for whose deaths he was responsible. How did you

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originally plan on scoring those last moments?

Well, very similarly to as it finally was. But at the very end, I wanted to go up a little more, and leave some ray of hope for the man. Musically, it seemed more natural—to develop it, and then end on a rise and a final redemption. But Lang didn't buy that. He said, "If we did that, it would defy the whole idea of my picture. This has to be downbeat, all the way to the very last frame." And he convinced me he was right. That's the way I scored it. Goes out, very sombre to the very end, and just a few finishing chords, and that's it.

You scored two films produced by Val Lewton, unfortunately after his series of horror pictures. Did you work with him or with his directors?

I only dealt with Val Lewton, and it was a joy working with him. Such a wonderful

fellow. He was a very literate guy, and he had a very highly developed sense of humor. PLEASE BELIEVE ME was at MGM and, to my surprise, he appeared a year later at Universal, and he asked for me. I did something interesting for him in APACHE DRUMS. The main title is nothing but drums, running against each other in counterpoint. I recorded it on five different tracks and then combined them into one.

Had you discussed the idea with Lewton?

Oh, sure, he loved it. And with a title like APACHE DRUMS, you couldn't ask for more. Another interesting development—I think it was this film, but it may have been some other western that I did. There was a war chant in it, Indians dancing around the fire, so they had the brilliant idea to call in real Indians to do the pre-recording. Now, when these real Indians

come in, none of them could speak any Indian dialect. None of them. They were real Hollywood Indians. I said, "We can't do it this way," so, what I did was I invented an Indian language. I did some research, studied different dialects from the part of the country where the picture took place. I wrote the chant and the dance that accompanies it, and I put these Indian words into it. And then I called back these Indians, but I added about eight good voices, because these Indians had no voices, they were just mumbling. [Salter smiles] And then, I, the guy from Vienna, the master of suspense and terror, taught these Indians how to sing in Indian!

How about the funeral chant in THE MUMMY'S HAND—did you have to do research on that?

[Salter laughs] That was pure unadulterated Salter! Right from the tap! I had to

... WHEN THE MOON IS FULL AND BRIGHT—Without Salter's music, the moonlight stealing through the hospital window in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN might merely seem idyllic. But the composer's theme for celeste, high strings and high woodwinds, while strangely beautiful, conveys the element of ominous portent for bed-ridden Larry Talbot. (©1943 Universal Music Corp.)

Top Left: Salter takes a stroll on the backlot with two of his Universal colleagues in the early forties. The man in the middle is director Henry Koster. To the left is the late Charles Previn, head of the music department and collaborator, with Salter and Frank Skinner, on the landmark score for THE WOLF MAN.

Above: Lon Chaney Jr. in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943) stalks to the strains first composed by Salter for THE WOLF MAN (1941).

CONDUCTOR

"Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man"

Child Victim

1279

by H.J. SALTER

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get an extra provision in the budget to hire the eight vocalists for that sequence. I always liked to dress up certain scores with unexpected ingredients like the human voice.

I have a tape here of selections recorded from the sound tracks of a few of your horror pictures. According to the Universal cue sheets, you wrote the main title to *THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS*, introducing the motif which receives many varied treatments throughout the score. Perhaps the loveliest variation occurs in the final scene when Vincent Price regains visibility and is reunited with his beloved. [Playing tape] Skinner shares credit with you on this sequence. This was a long time ago, of course, but can you recall which contribution was yours and which was Skinner's?

The only thing I can say is that probably only those last three or four bars were Skinner's tacked on to the rest of it. But I

THE MUSE OF THE STOP WATCH

—“The art of motion-picture scoring,” says Salter, “is to express in concise terms, within a given space of time, everything that is required to help the scene.” Complete at left is “Child Victim,” the conductor’s score of the eloquent Salter dirge composed for a mere forty-five seconds of *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* in which villagers carry the body of the Wolf Man’s latest prey through the streets of Visaria. (© 1943 Universal Music Corp.)

Top: The Festival of the New Wine, “...and may [he] live eternally!” sing the villagers, which turns out to be the last thing that Larry Talbot wants to hear in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943).

think it’s all mine up to the point where it goes into that apotheosis at the end. It sounds like a good piece.

When you Salterized *SON OF DRACULA*, you used the same piece but for a totally different, unhappy ending. You superimposed a solo violin, which made a lot of difference. Now, in these selections from *THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN*, the theme Ygor plays on his shepherd’s pipe at the beginning takes many forms, for many different purposes, in the background scoring throughout the picture.

At the time, it seemed a logical idea to devise a strange-sounding theme for Ygor’s horn that could also be used and enlarged in all kinds of disguises and fashions in the rest of the score.

Frank Skinner took a similar approach in *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, using an instrument called a *blute* for the sound of Lugosi’s horn.

Mine was an English horn. It’s probably that lowered fifth that repeats itself—da-da-da-da-da—which gives it that particular flavor.

For the opening graveyard sequence of *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, as the ghouls approach the Talbot crypt, you wrote one of your moodiest themes. Is that an organ playing the melody over those low strings?

It’s a novachord. These string chords are based on fourths, which have a strange quality. Usually, chords are based on thirds, but these are based on fourths—there’s a fourth interval between each voice. When you move these chords back and forth it gives a special, eerie and mys-

terious feeling. And then, if you put on top of it an eerie-sounding melody line with the novachord, it really adds up to something very strong.

When the grave-robbers break in and remove the wolf-bane from Larry Talbot’s corpse, the moonlight filters in and we hear the theme which will accompany the moonlight and warn us throughout the film whenever Talbot is about to become a the Wolf Man.

There is a celeste in there, high strings, and high woodwinds. It’s the interplay between these three elements that creates that effect.

Your scores are usually very melodic, even in the most horrific passages. But when that animal hand grabs slowly for the thief’s wrist, you merely build a few slow chords that are so low-pitched they’re almost more sound effect than music. The effect is chilling. How did you achieve that unique sound?

That’s the novachord again, but in a low register which is very rarely used. Most people use the instrument for melody line, higher, or screaming chords, higher. But that low register has an ominous quality. [As the tape plays the scene of Talbot’s transformation in the hospital] Boy, oh boy. All that music that I’ve written. I never realized it!

How does it sound, being heard the first time in over thirty years?

Pleasing. I’m very critical of my own music. And if I hear, after thirty years, that I was on the right track even then, that gives you a good feeling.

After handling all the major Universal



Checking a score in the MGM editing room.

horror films, including all the *Wolf Man* and *Frankenstein* pictures, why didn't you serve as musical director on the last of the series, *HOUSE OF DRACULA*, in 1945?

In all probability, I simply wasn't available. I must have been working on another picture at the same time. We composers were like taxi drivers. As soon as we finished one job, we grabbed the next fare that came along and then we were off.

In the 1950s, you participated in the science fiction boom at Universal through your contributions to the scores of *THIS ISLAND, EARTH* and *THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN*. Do you recall working with producer William Alland or director Jack Arnold?

As far as my work was concerned, Alland's contribution was a minor one compared to Jack Arnold's. Arnold was a very congenial man. We would discuss the scoring and we pretty much saw eye-to-eye on the approach. That *SHRINKING MAN* was a very interesting project. In scenes where his size reduced, we weren't able to work from the final product because the special effects team was still working on it, so we composers had to use our imaginations and score our own fantasies. The music cutters

told us the rate of the character's reduction [for the climax] and how many seconds it would take, but that was all. But this was typical with a special effects picture; we often had to revise our scores or shorten them after the effects were finished. On those *Invisible Man* pictures we never had the finished product to work with. That was understandable, because John Fulton took great pains to see that every effect would come off as he had planned. We composers never saw the final product until the preview. I remember how mad I used to get when, after working frantically day and night to meet a certain recording date, Fulton still took his good time—maybe a week or ten days—before he was ready for the preview. I could have used some of this time to very good advantage.

I believe that Herman Stein and Henry Mancini scored all of the early portions of *THIS ISLAND, EARTH* and that your work was on the cataclysmic finale, with the planet blowing up and the mutant running amok...

I usually inherited the "colossal" sequences.

Although you wrote some melodic passages for *THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON*, your scoring of the Creature and the Metaluna mutant in *THIS ISLAND, EARTH* was strikingly discordant, more so than for the *Frankenstein* or *Wolf Man* pictures.

I can only tell you that what is right for one picture is not necessarily right for another picture. I tried to write music that would be appropriate for those particular scenes.

What are your feelings about this year's highly successful science fiction scores by John Williams, *STAR WARS* and *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*?

It really is not fair to compare the two scores. I like them both. Of the two, I like *STAR WARS* more, because it contributed more to the picture. In *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*, however, I liked the final scene in which music became an integral part of the story. I thought that that was a very fine touch.

Do you have any recollections of the late Bernard Herrmann, whose fantasy scores have gained renewed interest in recent years?

I'd prefer not to discuss my memories of him. "De mortuis nil nisi bene." But I must say, he was a very talented man. I liked his early scores more than his later ones. His *CITIZEN KANE* was a landmark, a real breath of fresh air. Later, I think, he seemed to go off on a tangent as

though he thought his music was more important than the picture, and this got him into a lot of trouble. *PSYCHO* was good. Not all the way through, but some of it was great. But in some pictures he started using outlandish orchestrations. It was as if he had the faculty of cutting out the director when they were discussing what kind of a score was needed. He would seem to be listening to the director but he listened only to himself. This is just my impression, however; I never discussed it with him.

Are you familiar with Rozsa's classic fantasy scores for *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD* and *THE JUNGLE BOOK*?

Oh, yes. Of all the film composers, I would say that Miki is in a class by himself. He has developed his own unique style which is highly recognizable, and he has kept his high standards. He is really the only one of us who has managed to maintain a film career and still fulfill himself in the concert field.

Before you came to Universal, the studio had been blessed by distinguished scores by Heinz Roemheld for *THE INVISIBLE MAN* and, especially, by Franz Waxman for *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Might they have any influence on your work in the horror genre?

I did not meet Roemheld until much later. I studied his score for *THE INVISIBLE MAN* at the Universal library, because I was looking through all the scores, but it made no indelible impression that I can recall. I thought Franz did very well with his score for *THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. I saw the film before coming to this country. But Franz and I knew each other from the very beginning when he was playing the piano with a German jazz band. I always thought he was a very fine composer. But when I came to Universal, he was with MGM, so the pictures of his which we discussed were for that studio. His *Frankenstein* score was not really an influence on me.

What sort of compensation did Universal offer their composers? Were you paid per film, or per week, or what?

For a composer, that can work in one of several ways. He can be paid a weekly salary, or on commission, or by a package deal in which the composer acts as an independent contractor, not only writing the score but hiring the studio and the musicians and gambling on his own talents to get through in time—otherwise the overtime comes out of his own pocket. In my case, I started at Universal with a weekly salary which increased every year until I left in 1947 to work on a free-lance commission basis. I



came back to Universal in 1950 and signed a three-year contract. After that ran out, I worked freelance again, on a flat weekly salary with a three-to-four week guarantee.

And were you ever paid when your music would be re-used, without screen credit, in later Universal films?

No. Once they paid you for the original assignment, they were free to use your music again and again, run it backwards, or mutilate it in any way they saw fit. A composer like Jerome Kern or Richard Rodgers could make arrangements for future credit and remuneration for his work, but we miserable plebes never had that chance. Congress passed a new copyright law in 1976 which corrected some of these inequities.

Often the music credit would merely say "Musical Direction by Joseph Gershenson..."

When more than two composers contributed to a score, only the music director

got the credit. I conducted most of my own scores, but when Gershenson came in, he liked to conduct sometimes. He would conduct, and I would sit in the control room and tell him what was wrong.

So it was wrong more often than right?

Well, naturally. I know better what I want to express in a sequence than he does. He was a good technician, but he had no sensitive feeling for what was in the music itself, sometimes he missed the meaning completely. So I had to tell him what was the idea behind this or that, and he would agree and do it the way I wanted.

Do you receive residuals when your films are shown on TV?

I get something from the three networks. That is, they pay a sum to ASCAP once a year for the use of their whole catalog, and this is divided among the membership. We get nothing from the independents. I try to let ASCAP know when I see one of my pictures on an independent station, but there is no regular survey basis to keep track of these things, so there is no proof that the ASCAP material is used. There are many inequities in this business. Because of the United States' medieval copyright laws, the studio, and not the composer, is the "author" of his own music. There was a time when even ASCAP refused to pay film composers special compensation for their work. Revenue from film showings used to go into the pot for distribution to the whole ASCAP membership.

You've spoken of Universal as a factory and of the pressure to meet release dates. About how much time would usually

elapse between your pre-production discussion with the producer and his showing you the rough cut of the film?

That differed. Sometimes they were in trouble or they had bad weather, so it took longer to shoot it and longer to cut it. But at the end of it was always a release date they had to meet. So the longer they took to cut a picture the less time would be left between that point and the release date, and the people to suffer would be composers and sound-dubbing men, because these had to be squeezed together. Instead of one week, maybe in three days or so. On the average, it would take at least six weeks after pre-production discussions before they would show me their film.

After which you would run the film a couple of times for just yourself?

And then started a fight for the film. Because, in those days at Universal, each one of these departments wanted to have the film to work on it, and there was only one copy available. Later on, when they made color films, they made a dupe in black and white for us to work on. But in the early days, everything was black and white, so this was the only copy that was available. So the sound department would call up and say, "I'll give you Reel One if you'll give me reel six." And two hours later they said, "Okay, you can have Reel Six, but now we want Reel One back." And you couldn't make any marks on this film because this was to be the copy that was taken out for a preview later on.

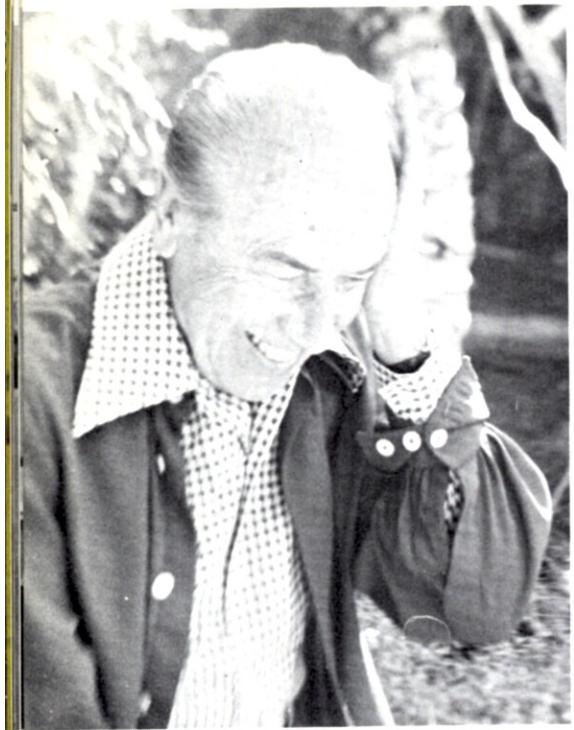
How many instrumentalists did the budgets allow you for your orchestra?

For the horror pictures, something like

ELEGY FOR THE UNDEAD

A few bars from the "Queens Hospital" cue in *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN* show a fragment of the theme Frank Skinner originally wrote for "Bela's Funeral" in *THE WOLF MAN*. This plaintive motif was "Salterized" into the scores of all three of the *Wolf Man* sequels.

Top: "...not for the dead, but for one who wishes that he were dead," Lon Chaney Jr. as the tormented Larry Talbot confronts Maleva the gypsy woman (Maria Ouspenskaya) in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943). Salter's score for the film made use of some themes composed by colleagues Frank Skinner and Charles Previn.



"My God, how many pictures we saved for them!"

thirty men.

Did you have to employ any technical tricks to get those thirty to sound like the larger orchestra we seem to hear on the films' sound tracks?

Oh, sure, you'd have to orchestrate in a way that hid all the weak points in an orchestra. Let's say you have only six violins. If you just let the six violins play, it sounds thin. But if you double up the six violins with two flutes and two clarinets and an oboe and bassoon, it hides it somehow. It sounds fuller and it takes on a different coloration altogether. Then there was the placing of the mikes and balancing certain parts of the orchestra against the rest of it. And in the dubbing you could help, too, by adding more to the lower end or the higher end of the frequencies on the sound track, according to what was necessary.

On a recording day, how much time would be allowed to rehearse before recording?

[Salter laughs] Very little. The less the better, because time was money. You had to write it in a way that the musicians could read it without difficulty, rehearse a few key spots that were a little harder, and then you would go for a take right away. Sometimes one sequence would be six minutes long, which would be too long to re-

cord. If there was a mistake at the end of six minutes you would have to go back to the beginning and record the whole thing all over again. You had to have one take that was immaculate. So you would break the sequence into two or three pieces which would segue one into the other. Even then, there could be problems. I remember one instance where I had already made a take on one sequence and the moment the red light was off the film's cutter rushed in and said "Hold everything! We just made another cut!" So he showed me the cut. I had to discard the whole take, make a cut in the music, and then record it. Things like this happened quite often. Rarely was a picture really finished when I got it.

Although such madhouse conditions no longer plague Mr. Salter, he remains musically active. Until recently, the Salter representations on commercial recordings was meager and in no way reflective of his stature as a film composer. Salter has always maintained his good humor about such inequities. When a film-music publication recently paid tribute to Salter and other "Obscure Film Composers," Salter was amused to note that he was in good company, as the list included Aaron Copland; and for a time Salter would occasionally refer to himself as "that obscure composer." Recently, however, what amounts to a Salter renaissance has begun to redress the balance. "The Master of Terror and Suspense" is appearing with increasing frequency in print, in person, and, most importantly, on records.

In the spring of 1977, the UCLA Extension and Filmex (the Los Angeles Film Exposition) cooperated in presenting a series in which film composers showed film clips of their work and discussed their art with the audience. Author/producer Tony Thomas, the series' coordinator and host, organized each evening around a single theme. The program devoted to "Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction" featured Salter, Jerry Goldsmith, Leonard Rosenman, Jerry Fielding and David Raskin (presenting a tribute to the late Bernard Herrmann in addition to discussing his own scores). Following a screening of the first reel of *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, Salter, with his customary good humor, answered questions from Thomas and members of the audience. Afterwards, the composer's fans gathered around him seeking his autograph and the answers to further questions.

Shortly after the Filmex/UCLA celebration of film music, Tony Thomas' Citadel Records issued *MAYA*, the first LP devoted

solely to a complete Salter score. Citadel soon followed this Salter television score with another, *WICHITA TOWN*. Yet perhaps Citadel's most important Salter record is the third and latest: *The Horror Rhapsody* (back to-back with the John Cacavas score for *HORROR EXPRESS*). Subtitled by Thomas "Music for Frankenstein, Dracula, The Mummy, The Wolf Man and Other Old Friends," the album presents selections from Salter's earliest efforts in the genre, (before, in fact, he had met a couple of the notorious gentlemen listed in the subtitle) including a few pieces discussed in this article, and incorporating references to some of Frank Skinner's themes. A glorious musical surface has at last been scratched, and it is to be hoped that *The Horror Rhapsody* is but a harbinger of more horror to come. (In the early '60s, Coral Records issued a *Themes From Horror Movies* album, conducted by Dick Jacobs and including music by Salter, Mancini, William Lava, Herman Stein, James Bernard and others. Of the four Salter selections, all but one was played and recorded abominably and/or smothered in superfluous sound effects. The French MCA label has recently reissued this disc, without the sound effects, according to one source.)

As to the scoring of films, Salter describes himself as "practically retired. These Producers," he says, "now want to get rich quickly on the music. They're not interested in helping their pictures. It's an entirely different ball game now, and I'm not going to contribute to that." Does he, however, still write music? "I'm working on a trio for piano, violin and cello, and also an orchestral piece, sort of a suite of about four or five movements. I hope to have two movements finished within a short time. I'm taking my time. I'm in no hurry. That's not like writing for the movies, where you have to be ready on Thursdays."

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RIGHT FROM THE TAP—
Some of Salter's "ancient Egyptian" words are seen in this portion of the funeral chant from *THE MUMMY'S HAND*. A chord progression remarkably similar to Salter's "Ah-mi-no-ki lo-ro" was used by composer Alfred Newman in his hymn to the sun god in the 1954 spectacle *THE EGYPTIAN*.

Top Right: A scene from THE MUMMY'S TOMB (1942), scored by Salter using themes by Frank Skinner, Charles Previn and Heinz Roemheld, as well as his own compositions. Shown are Turhan Bey, and Lon Chaney Jr. as The Mummy.



A (Modest) Hans J. Salter Filmography

There may never be a Complete Salter Filmography. Having culled the titles listed below from all published sources (and a trip to Universal's music library), I mentioned to the composer that his official feature film output comprised around two hundred pictures. To this, Mr. Salter casually waved his hand in the air, and said, "Oh, there's more than that." Mr. Salter, himself, has no record of all the films he scored weekly for the Universal Factory.

What follows, however, is a filmography more complete than any previously published list of Salter scores. No attempt is made to touch on the composer's extensive work for television, or to include those countless Universal features on which Mr. Salter did not work but which contain music Salter had previously composed for other movies. (A few such films have sneaked into the list because of their importance to the tale-of-terror genre —i.e. *HOUSE OF DRACULA*.)

On the films listed below, Salter served as musical director (arranging music by himself and/or other composers), or as principal composer of the score, or as composer in collaboration with one or more of his colleagues. A few of these collaborations are noted.

(The lone scene Salter scored for *RAGE OF PARIS* has been singled out because of its importance in his American career. As Salter's first big break at Universal, the op-

portunity was arranged for him to score, on a trial basis, just one scene, although, as he later learned, another composer had been notified to be a stand-by in case Salter's effort proved unsatisfactory. On the big day when the composer conducted the studio musicians in the completed sequence for the soundtrack, the film's producer, Buddy DeSylva, was in attendance. At the highly successful conclusion of the session, the orchestra applauded Salter and, in the general enthusiasm, DeSylva stood up and declared, "I want two prints of that music track!" "Why," says Salter today, "I'll never know."

* indicates *cinefantastique*
† indicates Oscar Nomination

1938

THE RAGE OF PARIS ("Clock Sequence")
YOUNG FUGITIVES
MIRACLE ON MAIN STREET

1939

CALL A MESSENGER
THE BIG GUY
THE GREAT COMMANDMENT
*TOWER OF LONDON (Salter arrangements of John Dowland airs; remainder of score, though credited to Charles Previn, is by Frank Skinner)

1940

*THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS (with Frank Skinner)

SEVEN SINNERS (with Skinner)
*BLACK FRIDAY (with Frank Skinner, Previn, Charles Henderson)

FRAMED
ZANZIBAR
ENEMY AGENT
SKI PATROL
ALIAS THE DEACON
LOVE, HONOR AND OH, BABY!
I CAN'T GIVE ANYTHING BUT
LOVE, BABY
PRIVATE AFFAIRS
BLACK DIAMONDS
YOU'RE NOT SO TOUGH
SOUTH TO KARANGA
THE LEATHER PUSHERS
*THE MUMMY'S HAND (with Frank Skinner)

DIAMOND FRONTIER
SLIGHTLY TEMPTED
LAW AND ORDER
I'M NOBODY'S SWEETHEART
NOW
THE DEVIL'S PIPELINE
FIRST LOVE (with Frank Skinner)
SPRING PARADE
SANDY GETS HER MAN
MEET THE WILDCAT
MARGIE
TRAIL OF THE VIGILANTES
GIVE US WINGS

1941

*THE WOLF MAN (with Frank Skinner and Charles Previn)
*MAN-MADE MONSTER (with Skinner, Charles Henderson)
*HORROR ISLAND (with Skinner, Charles Previn, Henderson)
*THE BLACK CAT (with Skinner, Previn, Charles Henderson)
*HOLD THAT GHOST (with Frank Skinner, Previn, Henderson)

†IT STARTED WITH EVE
LUCKY DEVILS
SAN FRANCISCO DOCKS
MEET THE CHUMP
DARK STREETS OF CAIRO
MR. DYNAMITE
DOUBLE DATE
THE MAN WHO LOST HIMSELF
MODEL WIFE
MUTINY IN THE ARCTIC
MEN OF THE TIMBERLAND
TIGHT SHOES
HIT THE ROAD
BACHELOR DADDY
HELLO SUCKER
RAIDERS OF THE DESERT
A DANGEROUS GAME
BADLANDS OF DAKOTA
MOB TOWN
BURMA CONVOY
FLYING CADETS
ARIZONA CYCLONE
SEALED LIPS
ROAD AGENT
WHERE DID YOU GET THAT
GIRL

1942

*THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN
THE SPOILERS
PITTSBURGH (with Skinner)
*INVISIBLE AGENT
*THE MAD DOCTOR OF MARKET
STREET
*MYSTERY OF MARIE ROGET
*THE MUMMY'S TOMB (with Skinner, Previn, Heinz Roemheld)
*NIGHT MONSTER
NORTH TO THE KLONDIKE
TREAT 'EM ROUGH
BOMBAY CLIPPER
STAGECOACH BUCKAROO
FRISCO LIL

*THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. RX
FIGHTING BILL FARGO
YOU'RE TELLING ME
TOUGH AS THEY COME
THE SILVER BULLET
TOP SERGEANT
THERE'S ONE BORN EVERY
MINUTE
DANGER IN THE PACIFIC
DRUMS OF THE CONGO
TIMBER
BOSS OF HANGTOWN MESA
HALF WAY TO SHANGHAI
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS
SIN TOWN
DESTINATION UNKNOWN
LITTLE JOE, THE WRANGLER
MADAME SPY
THE OLD CHISHOLM TRAIL
THE GREAT IMPERSONATION
*SHERLOCK HOLMES AND THE
SECRET WEAPON
WHO DONE IT?

1943

*FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE
WOLF MAN (with Frank Skinner and Charles Previn)
*SON OF DRACULA (with Charles Previn and Frank Skinner)
HIS BUTLER'S SISTER
*THE MAD GHOUl (with Skinner, Previn and Charles Henderson)
*SHERLOCK HOLMES FACES
DEATH
EYES OF THE UNDERWORLD
MUG TOWN
HI 'YA CHUM
KEEP 'EM SLUGGING
CHEYENNE ROUNDUP
TENTING TONIGHT ON THE
OLD CAMP GROUND
COWBOY IN MANHATTAN
*CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN
RAIDERS OF SAN JOAQUIN
GET GOING
FRONTIER BADMEN
THE LONE STAR TRAIL
ARIZONA TRAIL
HI 'YA SAILOR
NEVER A DULL MOMENT
†THE AMAZING MRS' HOLLIDAY
(with Frank Skinner)
THE STRANGE CASE OF ADOLF
HITLER
*CALLING DR. DEATH (with Paul Sawtell and Frank Skinner)

1944

*HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (with Paul Desau, Skinner, Previn)
PHANTOM LADY
*THE MUMMY'S GHOST (with Skinner and Charles Previn)
*THE SPIDER WOMAN
*THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE
(with William Lava, Eric Zeisl)
†CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY
SAN DIEGO, I LOVE YOU
MARSHAL OF GUNSMOKE
HAT CHECK HONEY

HI, GOOD LOOKIN'
PARDON MY RHYTHM
BOSS OF BOOMTOWN
TWILIGHT OF THE PRARIE
ALLERGIC TO LOVE
†THE MERRY MONAHANS
CAN'T HELP SINGING
*THE SCARLET CLAW
*WEIRD WOMAN
*THE HOUSE OF FEAR
*THE PEARL OF DEATH
*JUNGLE CAPTIVE
*JUNGLE WOMAN

1945

SCARLET STREET
†THIS LOVE OF OURS
STRANGE AFFAIR OF UNCLE
HARRY
*HOUSE OF DRACULA (with Skinner, Lava, Previn, Sawtell, Edgar Fairchild, Desau, Henderson)
SEE MY LAWYER
I'LL TELL THE WORLD
*THE FROZEN GHOST
EASY TO LOOK AT
RIVER GANG
PATRICK THE GREAT
THAT'S THE SPIRIT
THAT NIGHT WITH YOU
*THE WOMAN IN GREEN
*PURSUIT TO ALGIERS

1946

MAGNIFICENT DOLL
*HOUSE OF HORRORS
HER ADVENTUROUS NIGHT
THE DARK HORSE
LITTLE MISS BIG
SO GOES MY LOVE
LOVER COME BACK
GUNG HO! (with Frank Skinner)
*DRESSED TO KILL
*TERROR BY NIGHT
*THE BRUTE MAN

1947

THE WEB
LOVE FROM A STRANGER
MICHIGAN KID
THAT'S MY MAN
GALLANT MAN

1948

THE SIGN OF THE RAM
MANEATER OF KUMAON
AN INNOCENT AFFAIR
DON'T TRUST YOUR HUSBAND

1949

THE RECKLESS MOMENT
COVER-UP

1950

PLEASE BELIEVE ME
THE KILLER THAT STALKED
NEW YORK

BORDERLINE

1951

APACHE DRUMS
THE PRINCE WHO WAS A THIEF
FRENCHIE
TOMAHAWK
THUNDER ON THE HILL
YOU NEVER CAN TELL
THE GOLDEN HORDE
*THE STRANGE DOOR
*ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET
THE INVISIBLE MAN

1952

BEND OF THE RIVER
FLESH AND FURY
AGAINST ALL FLAGS
FINDERS KEEPERS
THE BATTLE AT APACHE PASS
UNTAMED FRONTIER
*THE BLACK CASTLE
*THE 5,000 FINGERS OF DR. T
(with Frederick Hollander and Heinz Roemheld)

1953

*ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET
DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

1954

SIGN OF THE PAGAN (with Skinner)
BLACK HORSE CANYON (with Frank Skinner)
FOUR GUNS TO THE BORDER
(with Skinner, Henry Mancini)
THE HUMAN JUNGLE
YANKEE PASHA
THE WESTERN STORY
KISS OF FIRE
THE FAR COUNTRY
*CREATURE FROM THE BLACK

LAGOON (with Herman Stein, Henry Mancini, Milt Rosen, and Robert Emmett Dolan)
JOHNNY DARK
TANGANYIKA
THE BLACK SHIELD OF FALWORTH (with Herman Stein)
NAKED ALIBI
BENGAL BRIGADE
SASKATCHEWAN

1955

*THIS ISLAND, EARTH (with Herman Stein and Henry Mancini)
THE FAR HORIZONS
WICHITA

*ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET
THE MUMMY
MAN WITHOUT A STAR
CAPTAIN LIGHTFOOT

1956

AUTUMN LEAVES
*THE MOLE PEOPLE (with Herman

Stein and Heinz Roemheld)
*THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG
US (with Herman Stein, Henry Mancini, Heinz Roemheld)
NAVY WIFE
HOLD BACK THE NIGHT
RED SUNDOWN
THE RAWHIDE YEARS
LADY GODIVA
WALK THE PROUD LAND
THE RAW EDGE

1957

THE MAN IN THE SHADOW
*THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING
MAN
THE TALL STRANGER
THE OKLAHOMAN
THREE BRAVE MEN
JOE DAKOTA
*THE LAND UNKNOWN
THE MIDNIGHT STORY

1958

RAW WIND IN EDEN
APPOINTMENT WITH A SHADOW
SUMMER LOVE
DAY OF THE BAD MAN
THE FEMALE ANIMAL

1959

THE MAN IN THE NET
THE WILD AND THE INNOCENT
GUNFIGHT AT DODGE CITY

1961

COME SEPTEMBER

1962

FOLLOW THAT DREAM
IF A MAN ANSWERS
HITLER

1963

SHOWDOWN

1964

BEDTIME STORY

1965

THE WAR LORD (with Jerome Moross)

1966

BEAU GESTE
GUNPOINT
I KNEW HER WELL
INCIDENT AT PHANTOM HILL

1967

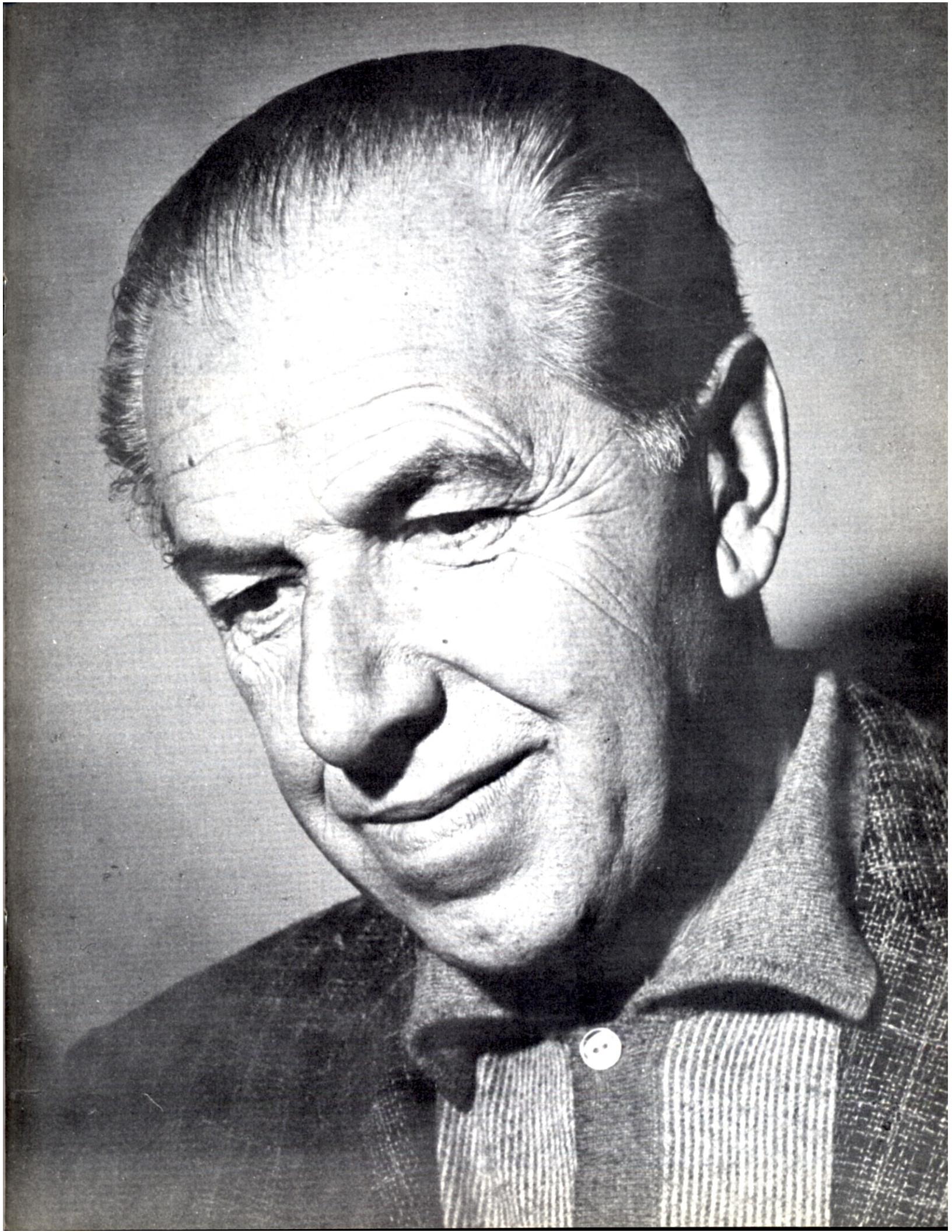
RETURN OF THE GUNFIGHTER
(made-for-TV-movie) □

YGOR'S (ENGLISH) HORN

—This is part of the theme Bela Lugosi's Ygor played on his shepherd's horn to summon the Monster in THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN. The motif reappears in various orchestral guises throughout the film, at times dominating the music, at others slyly insinuating itself into other themes, much as Ygor works his way into the lives of the characters. (©1942 Universal Music Corp.)

Right: Hans J. Salter, circa '50s.





Scenes from *THE MANITOU*, now in release from Avco Embassy Pictures. Left: Michael Ansara and Tony Curtis look on as Susan Strasberg gives birth to the ancient Indian spirit Misquamacus. Middle: Filming Joe Gieb as Misquamacus against a blue screen at CBS Studios for the film's special effects finale. Right: Curtis battles the demon in the ice encrusted hospital corridor.



THE MANITOU An Avco Embassy Pictures Release. 3/78. In Panavision and Color by CFI. 104 minutes. A Herman Weist and Melvin Simon Presentation. Produced and directed by William Girdler. Executive producer, Melvin G. Gordy. Screenplay by Girdler, Jon Cedar, Tom Pope. Based on the novel *The Manitou* by Graham Masterton. Music by Lalo Schifrin. Sound, Dolby Systems. Director of photography, Michel Hugo. Edited by Bub Asman. Conceptual designer and second unit director, Nikita Knatz. Production designer, Walter Scott Herndon. Associate producers, Cedar, Giles A. DeTurenne. Assistant director, Bob Bender. Set decorator, Cheryal Kearney. Costumes, Michael Faeth, Agnes Lyon. Sound, Glenn Anderson. Supervising editor, Gene Ruggiero. Special effects makeup by Tom Burman. Makeup artists, Burman, Graham Meech-Burkeston, Tom Hoerber, Joe McKinney. Sound effects, Fred Brown, Michelle Sharp Brown. Stunt coordinator, John Moio. Photographic optical effects, Dale Tate, Frank Van Der Veer.

Harry Erskine Tony Curtis
 Singing Rock Michael Ansara
 Karen Tandy Susan Strasberg
 Amelia Crusoe Stella Stevens
 Dr. Jack Hughes Jon Cedar
 Mrs. Karmann Ann Sothern
 Dr. Ernest Snow Burgess Meredith
 Dr. Robert McEvoy Paul Mantee
 Mrs. Wisconsin Jeanette Nolan
 Mrs. Hertz Lurene Tuttle
 Floor Nurse Ann Mantee
 MacArthur Hugh Corcoran
 Singing Rock's Wife Tenaya
 Prostitute Carol Hemingway
 Second Floor Nurse Beverly Kushida
 Wolf Jan Heininger
 Michael Michael Laren

Southern independent filmmaker William Girdler has never exactly graced the genre with his films. They have all been fairly quickly made, for obvious, in some cases *exact*, commercial reasons. However, such are the perils involved in working in this not only rush-to-completion but also rush-to-judgement of all movie genres.

THE MANITOU is the first of Girdler's films that comes from a fairly best-selling novel (by Graham Masterton), and he also had the benefit of time, money and a semi-major distributor (Avco Embassy) backing him. Yet for all that, **THE MANITOU** displays many of the weaknesses of his earlier films while lacking much of their energy.

Girdler produced **THE MANITOU** in association with Melvin Gordy with a budget of \$3,000,000, and collaborated on the screenplay with longtime friend Jon Cedar, who also stars in the film. Tom Pope also contributed to the script. The story is lame and slightly goofy. A woman (Susan Strasberg) suddenly finds that a lump on her back is growing larger, almost by the hour. Her doctor (B-movie stalwart Paul Mantee) and even a tumor specialist (screenplay writer Jon Cedar) scoff at her fears so she consults her former lover (Tony Curtis) who makes his living pleasing well-monied San Francisco oldsters with overwhelmingly positive Tarot readings. When strange occurrences, that is, events not planned as part of his highly theatrical performing, begin to butt into his "readings," he goes to his teacher (Stella Stevens) for help. They in turn track down an anthropological expert who advises them to enlist the aid of a medicine man (Michael Ansara) to fight the reincarnating evil spirit of Misquamacus, a 400-year-old Piscakawan medicine man, which is what ultimately emerges, in a grim parody of the birth process, from Strasberg's back.

I can't believe that Girdler was not aware of the ludicrous elements in the script (which he helped to write, with Cedar and Tom Pope). His ability to maintain our interest at all is probably admirable. For instance, when one of Cur-

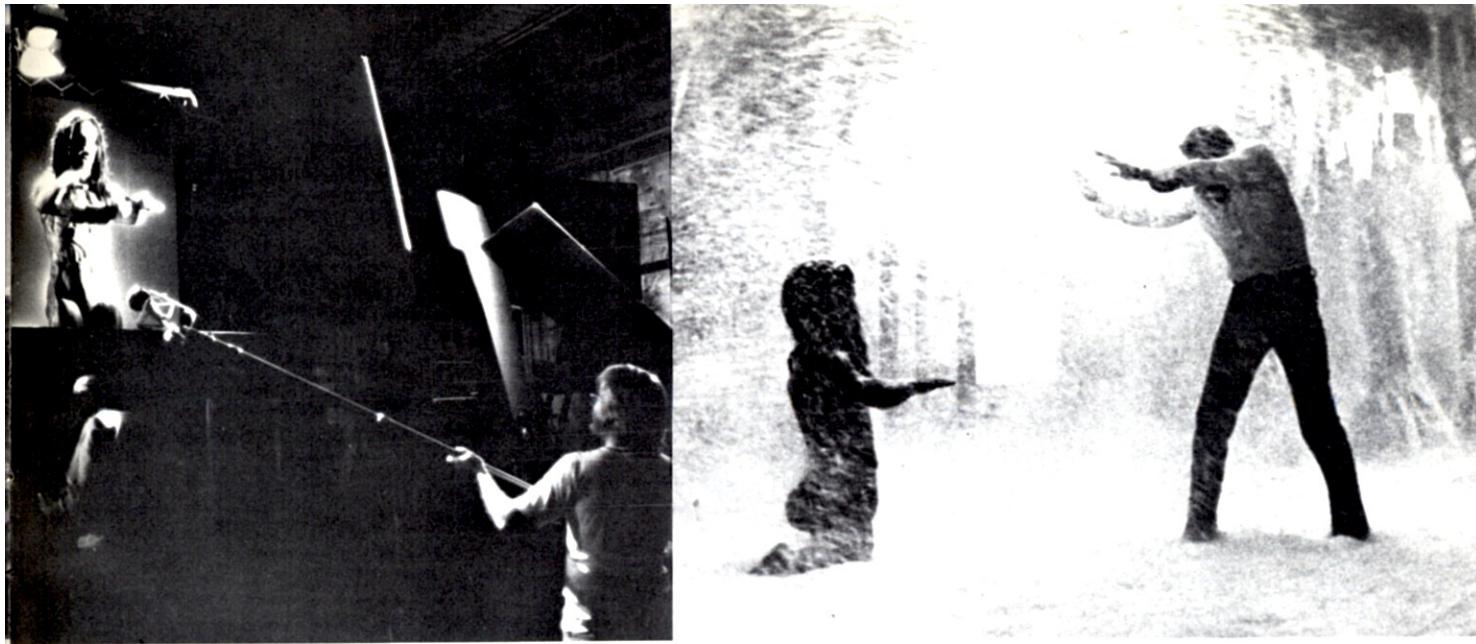
tis' decrepit old-lady clients (Lurene Tuttle) starts mumbling strange incantations in an extinct language and hopping around in an Indian-ish two-step, we're prompted to laugh. Yet Girdler cuts the laughs when the woman bolts from the apartment and tumbles headfirst down a staircase to her death. It's a tried-and-true genre ploy: douse the laughs with shocks, hopefully chilling, and Girdler will try to use it to similar effect all the way through the film.

THE MANITOU is not a mock-horror film like **GRIZZLY**, the very solemnity of which screenplay and film itself urged laughs. In **THE MANITOU**, we are meant to see everything through Curtis' eyes, although there are too many characters present to sustain that narrative device. But it works for a while. Curtis stumbles through the film partly amazed; he has spent his adult life manipulating the occult for his own profit, using it insincerely as a springboard for lies to assure sadly ageing people who will believe anything that costs enough and is good news in the face of their collective physical decline. Perhaps Curtis doesn't really believe in the occult, as does his mentor Stella Stevens (in absurd brown-toned "gipsy" makeup), whose belief in it and experience of its power have made her decide to quit practicing it. Curtis' surprise pervades the film; he's seeing the real power of the occult for the first time.

Curtis' attitude also helps ease some of the film's built-in unintentional humor. His line readings are flippant, and to the end he's a wisecracker. For instance, he consistently refers to Misquamacus as "Mixmaster." It's an attempt, which nearly works, to account for the laughs that will come anyway. But Curtis is also a pivotal character, midway between the medical specialist, a stolid non-believer (even when the spirit forces him, during an attempted operation to remove Strasberg's growth, to cut into his own hand with his own scalpel), and Ansara (in what is more-or-less the Robert Shaw role) as the modern-day medicine man. Curtis' path in the film is to swing over to Ansara's side, but we never quite believe

David Bartholomew is our New York correspondent. His issue-length feature on the production and distribution of **THE WICKER MAN** appeared in Vol 6 No 3.

by David Bartholomew



“...Good Vs. Evil, elevated to absolutes, and it just doesn’t work. . .”

it. We are also to believe that Curtis is (unconsciously) truly talented in the occult, as he is able, climactically, to call down the manitou of Love (“the greatest of all spirits”) to do cosmic battle with Misquamacus.

The film slips near the end, when the screenplay's cascading inanities catch up with it. The weakly visualized parade of “spirits” summoned up by both Ansara and Misquamacus soon takes its toll. Actually, the potentially endless line of manitous (or, spirits inherent in every person, place or thing) available becomes quite funny when you begin to think about it: the manitou of my chair, of my typewriter, or my clothes closet. And what would happen if the manitou of my freezer didn't like the manitou of my just-purchased (and thawing) frozen macaroni and cheese pie. Etc. The film sadly allows the audience no thoughts about itself, even on a thematic level, automatically separating it from genre classics.

THE MANITOU finally collapses when it leaves its realistic base behind and ventures into the abstract. It has threatened to all along, by the impetus provided by Burgess Meredith's dotty anthropologist, who turns Curtis and Stevens onto the idea of American Indians in the first place and decants about myth and Evil. But when the hospital floor is suddenly transformed into an ice cavern, and when Strasberg's hospital room itself becomes a star-littered universe with Misquamacus and Strasberg's bed separately hanging in nothingness, the battle is supposedly elevated to absolutes: Good Vs. Evil, and it just doesn't work (even THE EXORCIST, as well as ABBY, Girdler's rip-off of it, failed to achieve this.)

Not helping is the surprising crudity of the special effects. On the plus side are a passable seance sequence, with an oily head slowly rising from the center of the table, a fairly grisly birth sequence, and Tom Burman's makeup for Misquamacus (Joe Gieb), who emerges scarred and deformed by the hospital's diagnostic use of x-rays on Strasberg. However, most of the physical effects, especially the ice-encrusted corridor, are totally unbeliev-

able. There's also an obvious mechanical lizard creature that never should have passed inspection. The opticals, by Dale Tate and Frank Van Der Veer, which eventually stoop to a star-gate effect (evidently to drag in science fiction fans) are unsteady and unimaginative. That's a shame, because technical wizardry could have pulled the picture through.

Possibly, especially with its slack pacing, the film should simply hit harder than it does. (Polite horror films never make it.) Perhaps the violence was toned down to please Avco Embassy with a more marketable PG rating. Perhaps they “ordered” it. That some cutting was done seems obvious: a scene where Misquamacus throws a “trayful of scalpels” into Ansara's face is missing, although the act is talked about, and Ansara, still reeling from it, is well-bloodied in the next scene.

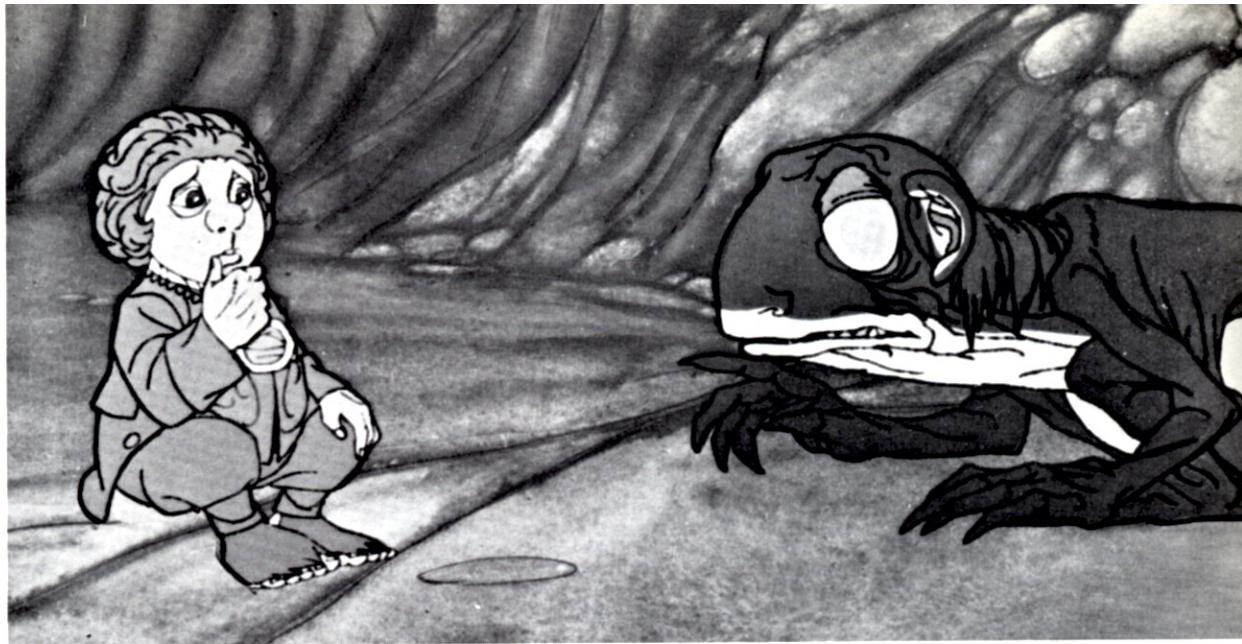
The numbing, TV-movie “all-star” casting syndrome runs loose in the film. Among the bizarre vagaries of it here is a single scene which makes up the entire nearly dialogue-less part for the 6th-billed (and tubby) Ann Sothern. Apart from Meredith's nicely restrained (for once) cameo, only Curtis comes out well. It's a fine part for him at this time and place in his career, and he acts the puffy weary charlatan with ease. The part is the perfect, aged crystallization of what seemed to lie beneath all his frenetically overplayed, Universal swashbuckling heroes of the early '50s. The old spirit is there, although we are occasionally embarrassed by its misjudged excesses, as when just after a “reading” he clicks off the spooky mood music and turns on some pounding disco and launches into a little finger-clicking jig. The part may be a comment on his earlier career; when Ansara unsuccessfully plays his last card and Curtis steps up to do battle with Misquamacus, we think for a moment that he's going to go one-on-one with him with his fists.

Girdler is not a subtle filmmaker; there are few visual ideas in his films, and they are completely without nuance. Details cannot be woven into the overall fabric of the film, no, they must be pointed out to

us. In an early scene, the two doctors, in closeup, at opposite ends of the wide screen, discuss Strasberg's obviously unnatural condition. In the background on a wall hangs a breakdown chart of the human body and the birth process, a cold medical visualization of and scientific attempt to explain the body's mysteries. As the foreground conversation continues, it's an interesting scene, but sure enough, a few seconds later, the two men turn to the chart and begin to mouth these things that have just been more effectively implied by *mise-en-scene*. In Cedar's office there's a block-y machine built right into the bookcase. The idea conveyed is the merging of new medical technology with the traditional book knowledge, with the added irony that both are helpless against Misquamacus' power. On a narrative level we wonder just what-the-hell it's doing there, in a doctor's office. (It looks like a cartoon H. G. Wells creation, almost a parody of a “machine,” like the thing Clive Revill suddenly wheels out of nowhere into the house in THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE.) Later on, Girdler “accounts” for its presence: it is there simply as a prop for Curtis to use to summon the manitou of all the hospital's machinery (reminiscent of the wonderfully romantic 18th Century musing, the “Spirit of the Machine,” to account for the Industrial Revolution) to do battle with the Indian demon.

The experience of making THE MANITOU may have been instructive for Girdler, however, it will remain, sadly, as his last work. He was killed in a freak helicopter accident in January 1978, while scouting locations for an upcoming picture. He was 30 years old. He made 9 feature films, of which DAY OF THE ANIMALS, his previous film, the second of a two-film liaison with Ed Montoro, with its successfully achieved slow disintegration of the band of sealed-off (by Nature and animals) humans and an exceptional use of wide-screen framing, was probably his best. Despite the flaws and limitations of his work, unlike that of many other young directors I had looked forward to seeing more of it. □

Left: A scene from the Rankin/Bass animated television special *THE HOBBIT*. Bilbo encounters Gollum and gains the ring of power. Rankin/Bass have a cartoon version of Tolkien's *Return of the King* forthcoming. Facing Page: Scenes from the NBC-TV series *MAN FROM ATLANTIS*. Patrick Duffy is the title character. Belinda Montgomery is his petite sidekick.



“...weakens powerful images in the interests of simplistic storytelling.”

THE HOBBIT An NBC-TV Special. 11/27/77. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced and directed by Arthur Rankin Jr. and Jules Bass (Rankin/Bass Productions, Inc.). Teleplay by Romeo Muller based on the book by J. R. R. Tolkien. Animation coordinator, Toru Hara. Animation supervisor, Tsuquyuki Kubo. Artwork, Minoru Nishida. Music by Maury Laws. Lyrics by Jules Bass. Choral direction by Lois Winter. “The Greatest Adventure” sung by Glen Yarborough. Voices: Orson Bean (Bilbo), John Huston (Gandalf), Richard Boone (Smaug), Otto Preminger (Elf King), Cyril Ritchard (Elrond), Hans Conreid (Thorin Oakenshield), Theodore (Gollum), Paul Frees, John Stephenson, Don Messick.

THE HOBBIT undergoes the inevitable trimming to bring it to manageable length. The Beorn episode is entirely gone, as is the dispute over the Arkenstone. The continuity is fairly coherent, however. Several scenes could, and should have been treated as set-pieces. What better way to engage the viewer's sympathy for the comfort-loving hobbit Bilbo than to see his beloved hole invaded by thirteen uninvited dwarves? The book has a comic build-up that Buster Keaton would have envied; but here it is thrown away in a perfunctory manner in order simply to get all the characters on stage as quickly as possible. One suspects that Disney, had he managed to secure the book while he and Tolkien were both alive, would have made the most of this. Again, the scene with the trolls is most clumsily done; the piecemeal snaffling of thirteen dwarves in sacks is a longish business if performed serially: but what is the cinematic process good for if not to compress time by skilful editing?

Character is often sketchily or poorly developed. This is partly an inevitable concession to the need for flow of story and because of time limitations. The author can afford to be discursive, drawing the reader aside to explain the motivation of one person and another, while the cartoonist cannot. But elsewhere the Tolkien character is sacrificed, to the detriment of

the story and its serious intent. Consider where Thorin Oakenshield first declares his identity to the Lake-men: “‘Thorin son of Thror son of Thrain King under the Mountain!’ said the dwarf in a loud voice, and he looked it, in spite of his torn clothes and draggled hood. The Gold gleamed at his neck and waist: his eyes were dark and deep. ‘I have come back. I wish to see the Master of your town!’” In the cartoon version he rises, looking like the Sleepy of Disney's Seven, from a ruptured tub, with a “I am Thorin grandson of King under the Mountain. I have come back...” and slumps into a collapse. Deflation indeed! Thorin the crusty, imperious, indomitable warrior (not called Oakenshield for nothing) is no longer a proud dwarf-lord; only a crotchety figure of fun.

The other dwarves are not developed at all and become interchangeable (except for Balin the look-out man, whom we recognize by his spectacles) and so finally expendable: the original death-roll in the Battle of Five Armies included Thorin and his kinsmen Fili and kili. Here it is increased to seven of the thirteen.

The wizard Gandalf is the most gorgeously charismatic character in all the Ring books, barring none. Yet here he is a rather nebulously defined figure of sour disposition. John Huston's voice is seldom used to best effect, except in the book's first serious poem beginning, “Far over the misty mountains cold...” By the time, in the book, the wizard says, “I am Gandalf, and Gandalf means me!” you already have a pretty joyous idea of who is meant. In the cartoon, he punctuates this statement with a bit of Halloween-y charlatany with lightening, quite unnecessary and misleading. The real Gandalf warms, as a fire.

The personality of Bilbo, obviously the key character in the whole story, is quite well-drawn, particularly in the confrontation with Smaug, which is just about everything a Hobbit-lover could wish. But some of the time he offends by being too confident, too cocksure, too

flippant. This is more or less in keeping with the scope of the work: having no narrator to catalog his inner feelings, doubts and uncertainties, which are legion in the book, he must appear as he would, perhaps, to the dwarves themselves: a successful hustler, or burglar, with no *malgre lui* about it.

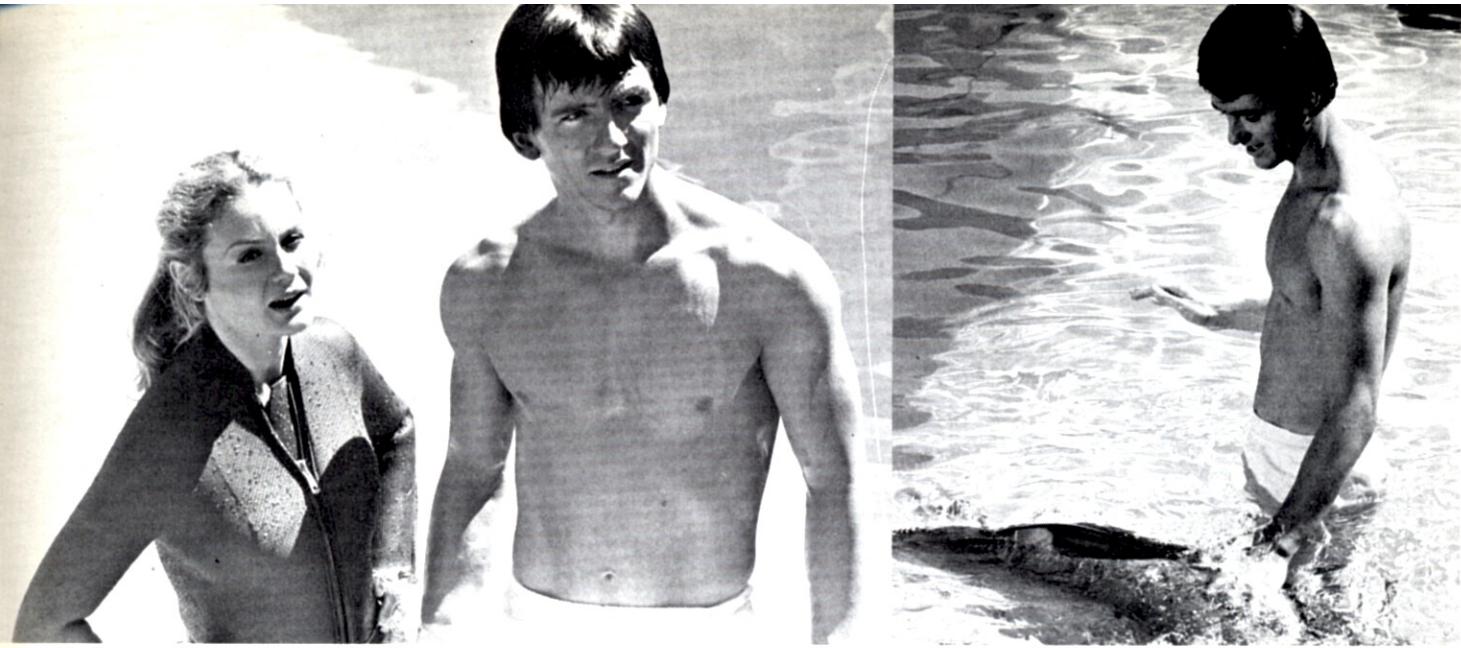
But then Bilbo also loses a dimension of compassion which is richly evident in Tolkien's book and makes him such an attractive personage with an enviable depth. Consider when the invisible Bilbo is following the despicable Gollum out to the Back Door: “A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart: a glimpse of endless unmarked days without light or hope of betterment, hard stone, cold fish, sneaking and whispering.” Instead we get, “How convenient... Well, follow the leader. Ta-ta,” as he leaps blithely and effortlessly (“no great leap for a man, but a leap in the dark”) over the creature's head to freedom.

In Gollum, too, we have a lack of fine detail in the drawing. The pathos of the creature is non-existent. Although the artist's conception is pleasingly imaginative, Gollum's distant kinship with hobbit-kind is suppressed in favor of an alien monster which scarcely looks like it ever had a birthday to find a birthday-present Ring of Power on. Even the quaint, rather endearing self-pity of Gollum's speech is vitiated by Theodore's garbled delivery.

The art-work varies from fair to first-rate. The screen really comes alive when Smaug takes to the air: a red-gold dragon with happy borrowings from cat and bat, breathing real fire. But one suspects that Smaug is the Production Number of the whole opus. The goblins veer towards comic-book parodies of evil: like the Cookie Monster with fangs. Lacking any vestige of humanity, the goblins lose a little of the power to bind the imagination with bonds of pity and terror. Again, the wood-elves are very far removed from what the author described: more like

continued on page 31, column 3

by David Hutchison



MAN FROM ATLANTIS

“... simpleminded ‘sci-fi’ banalities and infantile ecology polemic...”

MAN FROM ATLANTIS An NBC Series. Pilot Premiere 3/4/77. Second Pilot 4/22/77. 100 min. Series episodes 50 minutes. In Color. Executive producer, Herbert F. Solow (Solo Production Company). Producer, Robert H. Justman. Directors, Lee H. Katzin, Marc Daniels. Teleplays, Mayo Simon, Robert Lewin. Music, Fred Karlin. Art director, J. Smith Poplin. Supervising film editor, Dann Cahn. Editor, Gary Griffen. Special effects, Tom Fisher. Photographic effects, Gene Warren. Stunt coordinator, Paul Stader. Unit production manager, Kevin Donnelly. Makeup, Don Cash, Jr.

Mark Harris Patrick Duffy
Dr. Merrill Belinda Montgomery
Pilot 3/4/77

Mr. Schubert Victor Buono
Admiral Pierce Art Lund
Phil Roth Larry Pressman
Lt. Cdr. Johnson Allen Case
Dr. Doug Berkely Joshua Bryant
Ernie Smith Dean Santoro

Pilot 4/22/77

Miller Simon Kenneth Tigar
C. W. Crawford Alan Fudge
Lia/Dilly Tiffany Bolling
Xos/Chazz Burr DeBenning
Ginny Mendoza Annette Cardona
Grant Stockwood Alan Mandell
Medical Examiner Russell L. Arms
Herb Wayland Vincent Deadrick
Lou Maurice Hill
Myrtle Maralyn Thoma

adopting the castoff BIONIC WOMAN. After an INVISIBLE MAN, a GEMINI MAN, and an EXO-MAN (not to mention the dismal FANTASTIC JOURNEY series), they decided to stick with a MAN FROM ATLANTIS, who in turn got stuck at the barrel-bottom of the Nielsons.

Ushered in with a salvo of WONDER WOMAN-style “pilot movies,” the MAN FROM ATLANTIS is a hybrid of the Creature from the Black Lagoon by way of the aforementioned Amazon, a handsome underwater being helping Misguided Humanity through his affiliation with a United States (read “government funded”) oceanic research institute. Mark Harris (Patrick Duffy) comes equipped with webbed fingers, a built-in organic sonar, and the usual Spock-like naivete wherever human foibles enter the scene—which isn’t very often, considering the stony facades of his two principal dry-land allies, C. W. (Alan Fudge), a brass liaison of the Oscar Goldman ilk, and the overpoweringly petite Dr. Elizabeth Merrill (Belinda Montgomery), who seems fated to remain attracted yet diplomatically platonic toward Mark.

As for the adventures of this trio—meaning the show/scripts/stories/acting—they will forever be indebted to rival series LOGAN’S RUN, for without that show and its more blatant gangbanging of the canons of both good drama and good science fiction (along with the unabashed badge of name-dropping STAR WARS in its commercials), MAN FROM ATLANTIS would surely be the worst such series attempted. It is poisonously dull, snail-paced, and has yet to produce an hour-long show that doesn’t appear to be a severely padded five minutes worth of material. *This is the great science fiction boom?*

There is the expected reliance on sea-bound scientific hardware at the expense of story believability, and although those bits are at times intriguing—Gene Warren’s miniatures, for example—they remain undeveloped and unexplained (what

functional purpose is served by the submarine being a string-of-spheres?). . . red herrings, if you will.

Otherwise it’s another pedestrian roster of killer spores, man-eating jellyfish and ocean-control/world domination contrivances, with enough Mark-in-Jeopardy crises to exhibit his Atlantean powers and weaknesses: he swims through a variety of mismatched location and studio tank shots with peculiar, spastic motions contrived to appear fish-like, but which have none of the grace or implied power of say, the muscular strokes of the Gill Man. Like the Creature, Mark tends to languish when out of the water too long, providing for lots of hand-wringing whenever he falls ill of baddies who, either through diabolic design or down-home ignorance, deny him water until he starts to spoil. When re-dunked, he is strong enough to bend steel bars, and although he denies acquaintanceship with “human violence” or dishonesty, when braced he suddenly gains the ability to fight like James Bond.

Though lithe and very much the proper physical embodiment of an Atlantean, Duffy is unconvincing in his role of outsider. The shortcomings of the Mark Harris character are ample clues to the weaknesses of the show itself, which straddles simpleminded “sci-fi” banalities and infantile ecology polemic equally but separately. In the ecology respect it’s worth noting that the stationbreak “calling card” of the series looks suspiciously like the masthead of Shell Oil Corporation!

Outrage at another carbon copy is impossible; the cancellation axe fell in December and MAN FROM ATLANTIS sank permanently, like a gaffed trout. In its stead on NBC have popped up further manifestations of the so-called boom in so-called science fiction, and the bandwagon-jumping of QUARK or PROJECT UFO is equally unspeakable. Another Mark Harris clone will inevitably debut, if for no other reason than that this format is one comfortable to the networks, always unoriginal, but at least convinced of the virtues of recyclability. □

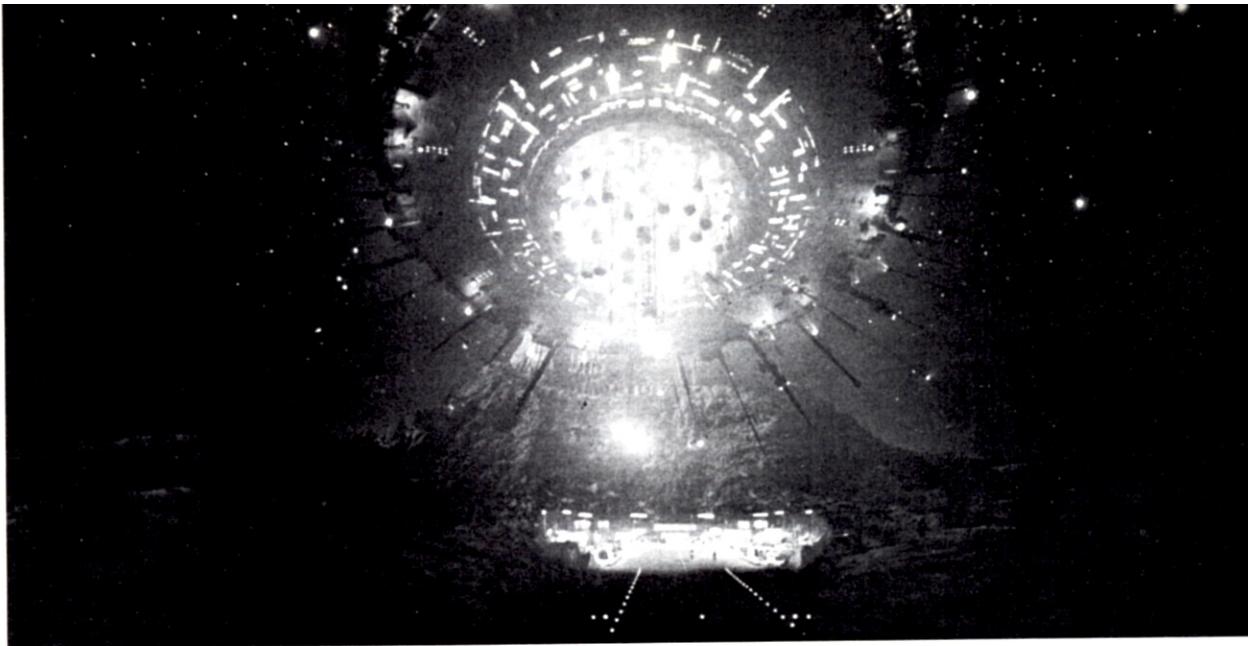
Allah help NBC, who for the last few seasons has so lusted after the slightest smidgen of ABC’s Bionic Family successes that they’ve tried everything short of cobbling up a ten-million dollar man (or boy, or dog), including greedily

Dave Schow is a free-lance writer and regular contributor living in Tucson, Arizona.

by Dave Schow

Scenes from *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, Steven Spielberg's UFO spectacular, now in release from Columbia Pictures.

Left: The Mother Ship lands at Devil's Tower, photography by Dennis Muren, model by Greg Jein. Right: A low-flying UFO skims the heads of roadside onlookers. Spielberg and special effects supervisor Douglas Trumbull carefully recreate the detail of actual UFO case histories



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND
A Columbia Pictures Release, 11/77. In Color, 70mm and Dolby Stereo, 135 minutes. Produced by Julia Phillips and Michael Phillips. Written and directed by Steven Spielberg. Director of photography, Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC. Special photographic effects by Douglas Trumbull. Music by John Williams. Director of photography, additional American scenes, William A. Fraker, ASC. Director of photography, India sequence, Douglas Slocombe, BSC. Production designer, Joe Alves. Edited by Michael Kahn, ACE. Associate producer/Unit production manager, Clark Paylow. Visual effects concepts by Steven Spielberg. Additional directors of photography, John Alonzo, ASC, Laszlo Kovacs, ASC. Technical advisor, Dr. J. Allen Hynek. Set decorator, Phil Abramson. Realization of the extraterrestrial by Carlo Rambaldi. Additional extraterrestrials, Bob Baker, Tom Burman. Art director, Dan Lomino. Supervising sound effects editor, Frank Warner. Sound effects editorial staff, Richard Oswald, David Horten, Sam Gemette, Gary S. Gerlich, Chet Slomka, Neil Burrow. Production illustrator, George Jensen. Special mechanical effects, Roy Arbogast. Make up supervisor, Bob Westmoreland. Special photographic effects supervised by Douglas Trumbull. Director of photography, photographic effects, Richard Yuricich. Matte artist, Matthew Yuricich. Effects unit project manager, Robert Shepherd. Special visual effects coordinator, Larry Robinson. UFO photography, Dave Stuart. Chief model maker, Gregory Jein. Animation supervision, Robert Swarthe. Optical photography, Robert Hall. Matte photography, Don Jarel. Mother ship photography, Dennis Muren. Model makers, Jor Van Kline, Michael McMillen, Kenneth Swenson, Robert Worthington. Assistant matte artist, Rocco Gioffre.

Roy Neary Richard Dreyfuss
Claude Lacombe Francois Truffaut
Ronnie Neary Teri Garr
Jillian Guiler Melinda Dillon
David Laughlin Bob Balaban
Robert Lance Hendrickson
Wild Bill Warren Kemmerling
Farmer Roberts Blossom
Jean Claude Phillip Dodds
Brad Neary Shawn Bishop
Sylvia Neary Adrienne Campbell
Toby Neary Justin Dreyfuss
Barry Guiler Cary Guffey
Team Leader Merrill Connally
Major Benchley George Dicenzo

If nothing else, the two glittering science fiction epics of the past year, *STAR WARS* and *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, have at least provided fuel for bored critics and essayists now that sex, violence and the lack of good women's roles are passe subjects. But whether science fiction will ever be the same is debatable.

In years hence, *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* is likely to be the more durable film by serious standards, although it will never become as popular as *STAR WARS*. Audiences won't be so attracted to a thoughtful examination of UFOs that they'll go to see it five or six times, as they have with *STAR WARS* (George Lucas' cinematic equivalent of a trip to an amusement park). For while both films use old movies as reference points, they spin-off in different directions. *STAR WARS* harks back to the *FLASH GORDON* serials and the Warner Bros swashbucklers, while *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* updates the invasion paranoia of '50s fantasy into a desperate optimism for the '70s. It's obvious who is aiming higher.

Actually, *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* attempts as sober a look at UFO phenomena as has been explored outside the documentary format. Its major asset in terms of credibility is that its visual pyrotechnics are incidental to the narrative, not the whole *raison d'être*. It's a praiseworthy approach—especially compared to the human stick-figures of *STAR WARS*—but in execution, ironically, it poses the main problem with the film. The human factor in Spielberg's screenplay is, well, boring.

The basic difficulty is that there isn't any conflict. True, there are the obligatory, UFO-debunking lines spewing uncouthly from the mouths of Air Force bigwigs. And one character's obsession with UFOs prompts his wife to take their kids and leave him (although they're such a pack of idiots he's clearly better off without them). But there are no villains, and nobody's life appears to be threatened. The worst thing to happen is that the

government makes it difficult for anyone to reach the site of the much-ballyhooed climactic "encounter"—yet the title of the film removes all doubt as to its inevitability.

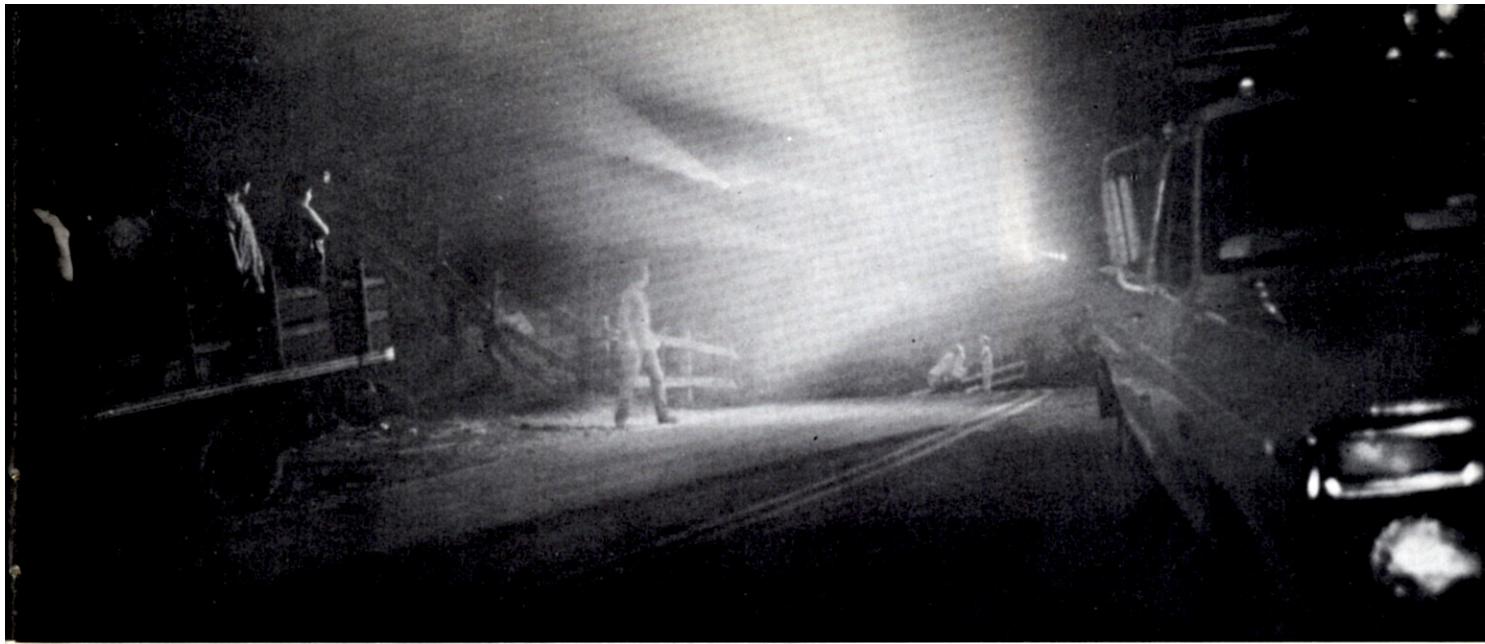
Since the same problem arose in *JAWS*, Spielberg's last film (which someone else wrote), the fault seems not to lie in his writing, but in his direction. He is unable to flesh-out his characters in a provocative fashion. For all the eyepopping technical innovations in Spielberg's films, their prominent unifying link is an inability to sustain audience interest on repeated viewing. His movies operate almost entirely on the surface level only. Once the initial suspense is satisfied, there is not much else going-on. It's a common dilemma for directors who are given their best shot during the formative stages of their careers, and it reflects inexperience more than the lack of talent.

Talent, after all, is the only thing that could have fused the other disparate particles of *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* into a cohesive unit. The movie's most intriguing quality is its point of view, which is built on a visual foundation that owes much to past science fiction movies, but determinedly reverses the cinema's pulp-fiction attitude toward extraterrestrials. In past days, the invader's intentions were, at worst, total annihilation (usually so they could abandon their dying planet and relocate here), or, at best, a stern warning for Earth to tow the pacifist line—or else.

Since the world was rarely transformed overnight into a haven of brotherly love, the "or else" was invariably thwarted by the efforts of a brooding, resourceful youngster, the protege of the leading man, a pipe-smoking scientist too immersed in his books to notice the leading lady. With such moribund characterizations, it's not surprising that the dominant remembered quality of '50s movie SF is fear—which haunted many films of that era.

In *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* there's a youngster too, but he's not the toddler who wanders from his bedroom to be taken for a ride

by Bill Kelley



“...Spielberg did not opt for the easy commercial solutions...”

on a flying saucer. He's Roy Neary (Richard Dreyfuss), a neurotic engineer seeking both an explanation for and a respite from the congested, frenetic tenor of life in the '70s. We know he's a dreamer from the disparaging comments his wife (Teri Garr) makes early in the movie, and we'd know more if he was played by a less self-indulgent actor than Dreyfuss, and if we could spend some time with him before his obsession with UFOs informs everything he does. But even on the surface, he's against-the-grain enough to generate interest while the plot rolled ahead.

There is a scientist too, in whose role Spielberg has wisely cast Francois Truffaut. Even for audiences with no knowledge of the French director's own lovely films (which means most of the people who will see *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS*), Truffaut's personality exudes such good vibes that the benevolent mood of the film is quickly set-up. Spielberg's systematic shattering of UFO movie myths makes it obvious that there is more on the horizon than the standard invasion force from the stars. The film's occasional tension is exclusively Earthbound, rooted in human malice and misunderstanding; the mood triggered by all references to the extraterrestrials is upbeat. Even the excitement spawned by their eventual appearance has only positive implications. The question is not, what will they do to us—but what wondrous secrets will they reveal to us?

Technical virtuosity and special effects supply the hook to advance the narrative a good part of the way, but Spielberg has a few other aces up his sleeve. Conspicuously absent from *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* are any references to just where the outer space visitors may have come from. It's too big an omission to have been accidental, and it contributes a nice mythic flavor. But, coupled with the emphasis the movie places on the near-ceremonial procedure required to communicate with the extraterrestrials, the ambiguity also plants religious implications in the climax. This may or may not be what Spielberg intended; to his credit, he doesn't say either

way. But the device has given a lever to the film's many eager detractors who, despite their apparent dislike of the science fiction genre, would presumably have preferred a hackneyed last-reel shoot-'em-up to the thematically ambiguous *denouement* they received instead.

The amount of research Spielberg and his crew poured into *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* is partially reflected in the physical look of the UFOs. They are glittering, translucent, ethereal, like a body of brightly colored lights—just the way UFOs are described by most people who claim to have seen them. To a degree, the movie is a glossary of classic, heretofore undramatized (and thus unstereotyped) UFO situations; the graveyard shift at a midwest air control station monitors the radio report of a pilot's UFO sighting; missing WWII aircraft reappear thirty years later in perfect shape; a huge mass of people experience an intense aural sensation which none of them can explain; in short, a package of exhaustively researched case histories which anyone curious about UFOs—whether as believer or skeptic—will be gratified to see assembled in one movie.

If only there were a powerful story to thread it all together! By hopping around from one half-developed plot to another, and back again, Spielberg trivializes the several compelling notions the movie contains, until most of *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS* positive qualities exist mainly on the level of ideas. In execution the film just never gets past the embryonic stage.

If *JAWS* had been less successful (by about \$100 million), and *STAR WARS* hadn't come along last spring, Spielberg wouldn't be on the hotseat now. He wouldn't be forced to prove himself so soon in his career, and his film, regardless of its budget, would probably be viewed with more perspective, as part of a growing body of work. In view of what has happened instead, it is worth noting that Spielberg did not opt for the easy commercial solutions. *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* is simply a talented filmmaker's ode to innocence, faith and good will. □

THE HOBBIT by David Hutchison
continued from page 28

BEMs than the ethereal beings of Rivendell. The dwarf-halls under the Mountain are lovingly done; but Gandalf's pyrotechnics are comparatively tame. Little is made of Tolkien's abundant love of nature; in fact one could argue that the artists didn't know what either eagles or thrushes looked like, and didn't bother to find out: the animated birds look more like, say, a large chaffinch and a swallow than anything else.

The songs and poems of *The Hobbit* are carried over very well into this version. Dwarves, orcs and elves all warble quite attractively through the action. The title song by Glen Yarborough is slightly gluey, but not too obtrusive.

THE HOBBIT is promising in several respects. Its strength of narrative could give an example to efforts like *WIZARDS* to which its artwork is in no way inferior. But it is sadly characterized by the weakening of powerful images in the interests of simplistic story-telling. Tolkien's message about the bitterness of war, with sorrow its aftermath, does come across in Thorin's last words, as in the book: "There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier place." But the point loses value, partly because of the trite overstatement of the anti-war theme, partly because we are not sufficiently caught up in the fates of the characters. Bilbo may shed a tear when Thorin dies, but we don't feel that much inclined to join him. The story has not set-up the moment adroitly enough.

We do get some feeling for the depth of History and the power of Legend which the original evokes, however, in one sequence where Bard the Bowman addresses in true Greek fashion the arrow with which he intends to bring down Smaug, aided by the thrush's message from Bilbo: "Arrow! Black arrow! I have always recovered you. If ever you came from the forges of the true king under the Mountain, go now and speed well." And great is the fall of Smaug. □

MARTIN A Libra Films Release. 1/78. 95 minutes. In Color. Produced by Richard Rubenstein. Written and directed by George A. Romero. With: John Amplas, Lincoln Maazel, Christine Forrest, Elyane Nadeau, Tom Savani, Sarah Venable, Fran Middleton, Al Levitsky.

A train speeds through the night. On board a young woman prepares for bed. Another passenger, a man in his late teens, skillfully picks the lock to her compartment and enters. He injects the woman with a hypodermic and, after a brief struggle, she lapses into unconsciousness. The intruder then rapes her before cutting open a vein in the girl's arm and sucking the blood from the wound. This is the introduction to George Romero's strange new vampire film. Ten years have passed since Romero released his cult favorite, *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, but much of the promise of that early effort has failed to materialize.

As the film progresses it becomes evident that Martin (John Amplas) is not tainted by the supernatural, but is a dangerous psychopath, the real monsters in our society who, perhaps through no fault of their own, endanger the lives of their fellow men, not unlike the vampire who is "cursed" and compelled to prey on the living. This is a dark and hopeless film. Martin is doomed from the outset, and the setting is a dying steel town, Braddock, Pennsylvania, which traps the young and condemns the old. Martin's cousin, Cristina (Christine Forrest) agrees to an unwanted marriage as her only hope of escaping the confines of her home and town. The young parish priest (Romero) lacks the faith to effectively administer to his parishioners and is thinking of closing the local church, the last refuge of the elderly. Against this backdrop Martin struggles with his "curse." His elderly cousin Tata Cuda (Lincoln Maazel) believes him to be a vampire and reinforces Martin's recurring nightmares (in black & white), which place him in a nineteenth century setting where he is tracked by an angry mob of vampire hunters.

Romero utilizes his low budget admirably, but the film lacks an ingredient that has nothing to do with funding: personality. Romero's depthless characters garner

John Amplas as MARTIN.



A ghost from *THE EVIL*.

no sympathy. Martin's ill-fated affair with Mrs. Santini (Elyane Nadeau) should have been the catalyst for audience empathy but isn't and consequently their deaths have little emotional impact. Martin's one normal sexual encounter results in his destruction. Romero seems to insist on populating his films with non-actors which may work with zombies but is self-defeating when characterization is required.

Dan Scapperotti

THE EVIL A New World Release. 2/78. 89 minutes. In Color. Produced by Ed Carlin. Directed by Gus Trikonis. Screenplay by Donald G. Thompson. With: Joanna Pettet, Richard Crenna, Andrew Prine, Victor Buono, Cassie Yates.

This haunted house movie has an interesting hook (the previous owner of the mansion rented by Crenna and Pettet imprisoned Satan in a vat beneath its basement), but too much of the horror is standard genre theatrics. Crenna blindly releases the devil and most of the cast is dead before the climactic duel between good and evil. One heroine is blithely carted-off into the dark by a partially unseen demon with black-hoofed feet. Acting is perfunctory. Andrew Prine, as an egotistical non-believer who slices his hand off with a saw and dies in a bog, still looks as though he buys his clothes at K-Mart; Crenna and company try hard to appear frightened while they are stabbed, punched, and tossed around. The film works as a mechanical thriller until the last ten minutes, with Crenna investigating Satan's domain and discovering a bemused Victor Buono, complete with DEVIL'S RAIN horns. Here director Gus Trikonis makes a fatal mistake, imposing a literal interpretation of the Evil. It is more effective with that distorted little monster that makes off with the girl. I couldn't figure out what it looked like, but I was dying to know.

Jeffrey Frentzen

COUNT DRACULA PBS-TV Telecast. 3/78. Three 60 minute segments of "Great Performances." Videotaped In Color. Produced by Morris Barry (BBC-TV). Direct-

ed by Philip Seville. Teleplay by Gerald Savory. With: Louis Jourdan, Frank Finlay, Susan Penhaligon, Judi Bowker, Mark Burns, Jack Shepherd, Rosco Hogan, Richard Barnes, Ann Queensbury.

This version, English TV by way of American public broadcasting, is immense in its 164 minute running time, and is wisely grouped into three successive weekly installments. Director Phillip Saville tries hard to be different, and there are a few honestly gruesome moments, fairly enlivening the material. The sight of Dracula crawling face-first down his castle wall is pleasingly strange; one quick shot of the Count's women, their eyes red and blood drooling down their faces as they feast on a murdered baby, is excellent, sneaky horror while it lasts. These two scenes occur in the first hour, though, so it's a bumpy downhill ride from there.

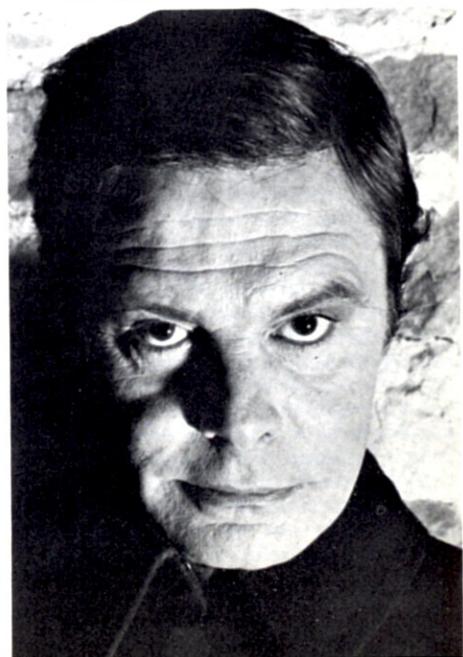
Gerald Savory's script attempts to be faithful to Stoker's original dialogue, settings, and characters. But when Lucy Westenra (Susan Penhaligon) is made a vampire, her hissing teenage seductress act shows that while Savory and Seville try to remain close to Stoker, their heads are with Terence Fisher and *HORROR OF DRACULA*.

The major disappointment here is Louis Jourdan in the title role. Initially, he seemed a good choice. He isn't as stoic as Lugosi and appears more genuinely European than Christopher Lee. But where the script calls for Dracula to be menacing and other-worldly, Jourdan is merely apathetic. To punch-up the "all-pervasive evil" of the vampire's persona, Saville sandwiches video mattes of Jourdan's face, eyes ablaze, over existing scenes.

Not all is bad, though. Outside of Jourdan, performances are uniformly good, with Frank Finlay an especially well-delineated Van Helsing. Cinematographer Peter Hall has brought-off a minor miracle in fully integrating the location film sequences with the interior videotape shooting, through lighting and a good use of filters. The overall production is handsome, if not quite authentic—Castle Dracula is not as much in the craggy Carpathians as the Welsh hinterlands.

Jeffrey Frentzen

Louis Jourdan as COUNT DRACULA.





Rick Baker & MELTING MAN makeup.

taking its inspiration from the finale of *THE DEVIL'S RAIN*. Poorly written and directed by Sachs, the film is almost totally implausible on a narrative level—nothing in the plot makes sense or is explained—and the actors, shot monotonously in closeup, are uninspiring, with the exception of veteran Myron Healey who gets a gold star by replaying one of his countless brusque military-man roles. Some of this works as horror, due only to special effects-man Harry Woolman's gimmicks and an occasional spurt of clever editing. Rick Baker is credited for "Special Effects and Makeup," but the difficult makeup is uneven from scene to scene, obviously due to budget and time limitations (which, come to think of it, have remained constant in the genre from those aforementioned '50s)."

David Bartholomew

LAND OF THE MINOTAUR [Costa Carayannis] Crown Int'l, 10/77(c76), color, 90 minutes. With: Peter Cushing, Donald Pleasence, Luan Peters, Costas Skouras. "This supposedly encountered such production problems that its producers nearly changed it to a comedy. Shot in Greece by a multi-lingual crew late in 1975, it is a weird, fascinating hybrid of '50s and '60s fantasy film clichés, and '70s gore. Cushing fends for himself (and rather well) in his first totally unsympathetic role in years, as a wealthy village official who moonlights as the head of a cult that worships the title monster. He presides over the slaughter of several reasonably pretty, platinum-tressed British ingenues amid some strikingly photogenic Greek caves—until village priest Doanld Pleasence and his New York playboy pal turn the tables. Disjointed and sloppy, but it benefits from an extremely eerie score by avant garde composer Brian Eno, and a PSYCHO/HORROR HOTEL protagonist twist. Cushing, with a suntan and a discreet hairpiece, looks 100% better in this shoestring quickie than in the \$10 million *STAR WARS*."

Bill Kelley

LASERBLAST [Michael Rae] Irwin Yablans, 3/78, color, 85 minutes. With: Kim Milford, Cheryl Smith, Roddy McDowall, Keenan Wynn. "A plotless, hope-

Peter Cushing in *LAND OF THE MINOTAUR*.



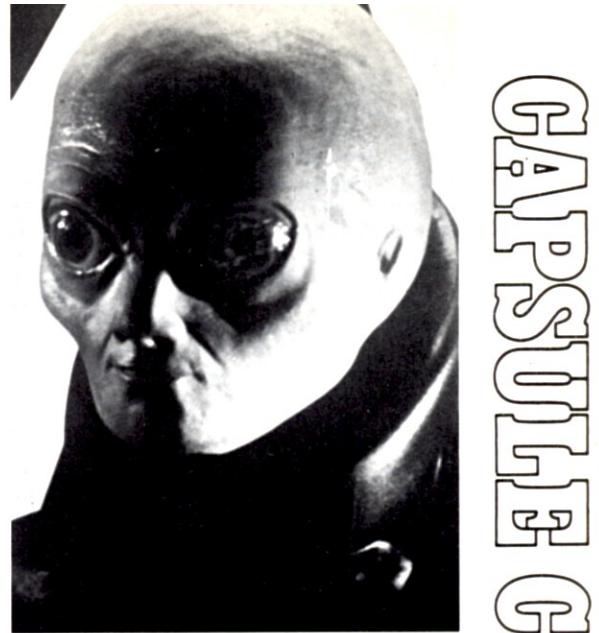
END OF THE WORLD [John Hayes] Irwin Yablans, 9/77, color, 81 minutes. With: Christopher Lee, Sue Lyon, Lew Ayres, Macdonald Carey, Dean Jagger, Kirk Scott. "A NASA scientist picks-up communications from extraterrestrials, and tracks them to a convent where father Christopher Lee and some nuns (actually, clones of the original tenants) are bringing about various cataclysms—which we never see. Remember, this is a low-budget film. Brief and embarrassing cameos for all involved, except barely recognizable Sue Lyon and Kirk Scott who carry most of the tedium. Incredibly tacky in all respects and deadly dull. Another step down for Christopher Lee, who had better start watching his step."

Frank Jackson

THE GLITTERBALL [Harley Cokliss] Children's Film Foundation (Britain), 3/77, color, 55 minutes. With: Ben Buckton, Keith Jayne. "Very much a film for the kiddie set. The story concerns an alien ball-bearing landing on Earth to find food and electricity for its continuing journey to another galaxy. Sub-teen elements abound with a maligned hero, a thief who steals the ball for his own nefarious needs and attempts by the local R.A.F. to discover it. Director Cokliss and animator Barry Leith have since been hired by Milton Subotsky for work on *THONGOR* (6:3:28), and it's easy to see why. The stop-motion effects here are stunning and better than any recent big-budget attempt. The Glitterball jumps up stairs, eats fruit, spits out what it doesn't like, has a particular penchant for slurping custard and is composited in scenes in a totally convincing manner. Shot in and around Elstree with music by Harry Robinson, the film is a major achievement in its own narrow field."

Alan Jones

THE INCREDIBLE MELTING MAN [William Sachs] AIP, 12/77, color, 86 minutes. With: Alex Rebar, Burr DeBenning, Myron Healy, Ann Sweeny, Lisle Wilson. "Like a shot of nostalgia, this is like a gore-ified '50s Filmgroup production, dressed in '70s cynicism. It's a pasty remake of *FIRST MAN INTO SPACE*,



END OF THE WORLD.

less pseudo-sf rehash of *DEATH WISH* (filtered through an adolescent power-trip fantasy) that encouragingly titillates with some fine David Allen animation and then bores with an interminable wait for more. The *STAR WARS* boom is coming to vapid fruition. It seems the producers didn't know what they wanted beyond aliens, a raygun and a surfeit of explosions. The Laserblaster inexplicably causes its human operator to mutate into an embarrassing compendium of every monster stereotype imaginable: EXORCIST eyeballs, a FRANKENSTEIN forehead, dimestore vampire teeth and blue skin, all beneath Kim Milford's ('The Rocky Horror Show') teeny 'surf's-up' mop. When the animation does return, it's only redundant. 'Juvenile' is the operative word here."

Dave Schow

THE MEDUSA TOUCH [Jack Gold] Warner Bros, 3/78, color & scope, 100 minutes. With: Richard Burton, Lee Remick, Lino Ventura, Harry Andrews. "The first ESP disaster film—not nearly as bad as it sounds—with Burton as a man who can will catastrophe with the power of his mind. Aside from three bogus fight scenes, used to punctuate a slow-building story, and unneeded, film is intelligent and finely crafted. Buildup pays off in a frenetic final half-hour and chilling conclusion."

Frederick S. Clarke

PROJECT UFO [Richard Quine] NBC-TV Series, Sunday, 8 PM EST, 2/19/78 Premiere, color 55 minutes. With: William Jordan, Caskey Swaim. "A better title might be *JACK WEBB JUMPS ON THE BANDWAGON* or *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE WORST KIND*. Based on the Air Force Project Blue Book, case histories are dramatized via two Air Force investigators who bear a striking similarity to Joe Friday and Gannon from Webb's previous series *DRAGNET*. Updated to the present, though Blue Book is now inactive, series is a naive whitewash of the Air Force's bungling of their investigatory role re the UFO phenomenon, amply documented by J. Allen Hynek and others. With bad special effects to boot, there's no way you can take the show seriously."

Robert H. Brown

GAPSE GOVINEEN S

STAR TREK— THE MOTION PICTURE

The movie that cried wolf has raised another alarm—this time at a massive press conference, held March 28 at Paramount studios. The Syndicated TV series revival is now off (6:3:31), and STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE is on, a rumored \$15,000,000 spectacular. Producing is Gene Roddenberry, and signed to direct is Robert Wise, an Oscar-winner whose films in the genre have all been first-rate, including the classic THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (1951).

All series regulars have been signed for the film, to star William Shatner as Capt. James T. Kirk and Leonard Nimoy as 1st Officer Mr. Spock. Featured are DeForest Kelley as Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy, James Doohan as "Scotty," Chief Engineer Montgomery Scott, George Takei as Helmsman Sulu, Nichelle Nichols as Communications Officer Uhura, Walter Koenig as Navigator Pavel Chekov, Majel Barrett (Mrs. Gene Roddenberry) as Nurse Christine Chapel, and Grace Lee Whitney as Transporter Chief Rand. Whitney as Yoeman Janice Rand bowed out of the series early in its first season (1966-67) in a tiff over her hairstyle. Signed as a new member of the crew is Persis Khambata, former Miss India, as Ilia (Eye-lee-ah), "an exotic woman from another planet."

Dennis Lynton Clark is revising the screenplay by Roddenberry and Harold Livingston, based on an original story by Roddenberry and Alan Dean Foster. Livingston had worked as producer on the ill-fated attempt to revive the series in syndication. Signed for "elaborate special photographic effects" is Robert Abel Associates, responsible for dazzling work in television commercials for 7-Up and Levi's. Working with Abel are Richard

Taylor and Con Pederson, the latter a special effects supervisor on 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. Jerry Goldsmith will provide the musical score. Sets, already under construction for the TV series are being revamped for use on the feature, which is projected to begin shooting in July for release in the summer of 1979.

While this all sounds as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar, it should be remembered that it was this time last year that Paramount announced a STAR TREK feature and the signing of a director (Phil Kaufman), an executive producer (Jerry Isenberg), scriptwriters (Alan Scott and Chris Bryant), and several cast members (5:3:33) all to no avail...but then, that was before STAR WARS.

THE DEMOLISHED MAN

Still on director Brian De Palma's drawing board after a dozen years of failed attempts to launch it as a film. The 1951 novel by Alfred Bester takes place in 2301 A.D. when extra sensory perception has become highly developed in many people. Crime is virtually nonexistent because no one can hide their guilt from the mind-readers. It tells the story of one man who tries to devise the perfect murder in this telepathic society.

When asked recently how he planned to dramatize mind-reading for a film version, De Palma replied: "It will be images, like silent movie-making all over again. We might use some words but not in direct sentence or dialogue form. We will use key words like images; more of a collage film." De Palma outlined his long involvement with the project. "I first read the book when I was in high school in the fifties. I think it was serialized in one of the science fiction magazines. In 1967, I was in a new talent program at Universal

and I wrote a treatment on it and submitted it to them, but nothing came of it. At that time the rights were owned by actor John Payne who didn't want to release them. When I sold PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE to 20th Century-Fox, I discovered that they had the rights. Some scripts had been written, one in particular by Alex Jacob, that had not been effective, and I made a deal to write a new script. But because Fox was involved in a few other science fiction pictures, STAR WARS and DAMNATION ALLEY to name two, they decided not to go with it. A businessman in Hawaii, John Damour, picked up the rights in the meantime. Edward Pressman, who produced SISTERS and PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE, tried to make a deal with Damour, but it didn't work out. When I started work on THE FURY, I asked producer Frank Yablans to read it and he liked it. Subsequently, Yablans made a deal with Damour and then made a deal with Fox. But now Frank Yablans has decided not to make the picture! It's in limbo again, but not exactly on the shelf. John Farris, who wrote THE FURY, is working on the script and when we finish it, we will make a deal with someone. Many people are very interested in it."

When asked how closely his script will follow Bester's novel, Farris commented: "I have not read the book in twenty years, and I am purposely staying away from it. My script will be strictly based on Brian's work, although he assures me that it is very faithful."

In the meantime, De Palma has two other film projects. The first is HOME MOVIES, a satire about a boy who is collecting evidence against his father for his parents' divorce case. This is a very low budget feature (\$125,000) which De Palma is currently directing in New York with unknown actors and a student crew. The second is FAIR GAME, a big budget thriller for Paramount from a script by former *Time* critic Jay Cocks (who put together the siamese twins documentary footage in SISTERS). It is a very bizarre story of a man accused of a murder he did not commit, but in solving the murder, he learns that he is indeed the guilty party. This is set to start production August 1.

Sam L. Irvin, Jr.

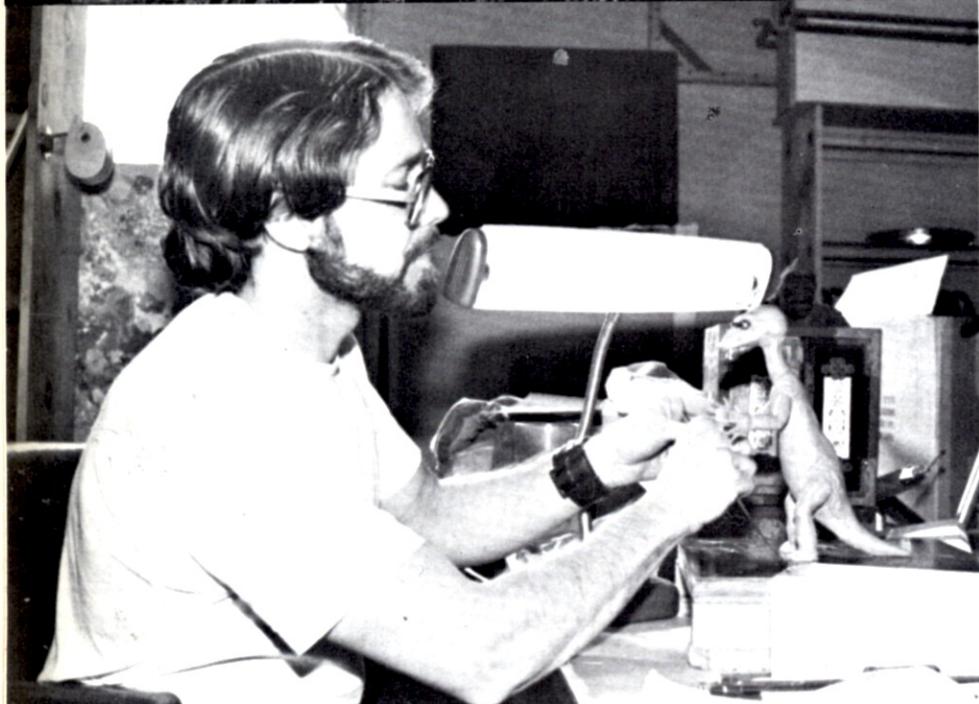
INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE

The film version of Ann Rice's notably bizarre first novel is presently in a state of production limbo, as reported by its producer Richard Sylbert. Sylbert, now at work in executive capacities at Paramount after many years a veteran of production design on several big Hollywood features (CHINATOWN, ROSEMARY'S BABY, CATCH-22), originally bought the continued page 46 column 2

Announcing STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE at a lavish press conference. Top: Leonard Nimoy, director Robert Wise, Michael D. Eisner, President and Chief Operating Officer of Paramount Pictures, who made the announcement, producer Gene Roddenberry, William Shatner and DeForest Kelley. (Photo by Robert Villard) Bottom: Assembled later in the audience was the entire cast: Kelley, Nichelle Nichols, Nimoy, Shatner, Persis Khambata, George Takei, Walter Koenig, Majel Barrett, James Doohan and Grace Lee Whitney.



THE PRIMEVALS



Pre-production on *THE PRIMEVALS* began February 1, and over a year-and-a-half will be devoted to the creation of special visual effects and stop-motion animation. The film is the culmination of the work of David Allen in the visual effects field over the past ten years, the fruition of a project which began in 1968 as *RAIDERS OF THE STONE RING*. It will unquestionably be a major treat for followers of the genre and promises to give this special type of picture a shot-in-the-arm in terms of keeping the effects at a reasonable cost and, more importantly, in terms of *scope and imagination*.

Not only is David Allen designing and directing, he is producing, co-authoring the screenplay, and supervising all of the effects and animation in the tradition of Willis O'Brien, his first and foremost inspiration. Charles Band, who is financing the production, is executive producer and making a bold departure from his usual low-budget affairs. The project jelled after Allen completed designing the stop-motion effects for *LASER BLAST* this past winter at his Burbank studio (6:4/7:1:4). Live action photography for *THE PRIMEVALS* will begin this Fall, and the film has all the earmarks of being a big prestige adventure-fantasy release for 1979-1980.

Allen's story, an extraordinary concept of evolution staged on surrealistic tableaus, combines the imagery and energy of Burroughs with a level of intelligence usually lacking in films of the *LOST WORLD* genre. "I'm trying to make the film credible," says Allen, "moreso than 95% of what we've been seeing."

Technically, the most exciting aspect of the project is that it is being filmed in Panavision, a process not used in the genre since *FIRST MEN IN THE MOON*, necessitating the use of mattes as opposed to process projection. While a more complicated compositing technique, it will provide a much better look than the traditional blend of live action and stop-motion. The script describes attacks by hordes of lizard-men, giant sloths, and an abominable snowman to boot!

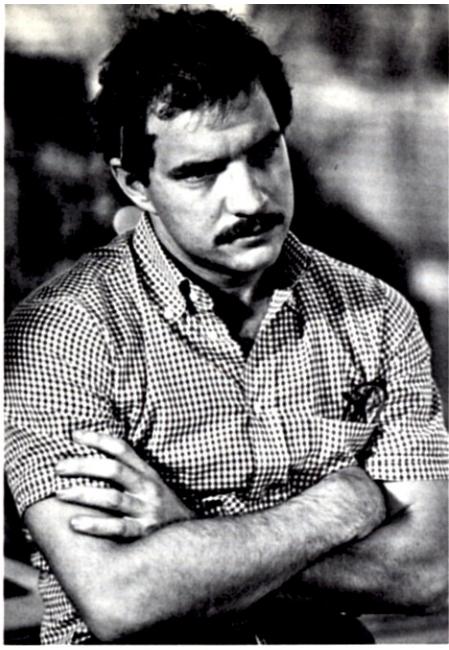
Among the corps of technical talent tinkering away at the Allen studio are writer-animator Randy Cook, art director David Carson, sculptor Phil Tippett and armature builder Tom St. Amand. Several others will be brought-in as work on the film progresses. Among the most enthusiastic on the project is financier Charles Band: "The budget will probably go over \$2 million," he boasts, "with most of the money going directly or indirectly to the special effects. It's the most exciting project I've ever dealt with!"

The complete, full-color story behind the ten-year evolution of *THE PRIMEVALS* will appear in a future issue, as well as step-by-step reports on the film's progress from production to release. □

David Allen's ten-year-old test footage for *RAIDERS OF THE STONE RING*. Top: Tree-huts of a Viking settlement. Bottom: A lizard-man attacks an explorer. Middle: Allen sculpts an alien for *THE PRIMEVALS*, prior to its transformation into a bestial lizard-man.

by Paul Mandell

PAUL SCHRADER ON C3K



Paul Schrader.

By means of a costly media blitz, the illusion that Steven Spielberg wrote as well as directed *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* has been pulled off rather neatly. Irked by post-release talk that the triumph of *JAWS* was not entirely his doing [insiders note the miraculous work of editor Verna Fields], Spielberg took steps to insure that no one could steal his thunder again. A veritable army of writers toiled over the screenplay of *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* without public acknowledgement. If you trace back through the long list of those who contributed, you eventually arrive at the name Paul Schrader. Schrader was the source. *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* was his original conception; *was* his conception.

Schrader is thirty-one. As a screenwriter he has been amazingly prolific. He's written over a dozen scripts in the past six years and sold every one of them. Of those, five have been produced, *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, *THE YAKUZA*, *TAXI DRIVER*, *ROLLING THUNDER* and *OBSESSION*. Within the film industry Paul Schrader has several well-earned reputations. He's considered a master of the hustle. His screenplays sell in the six figure category not by accident but by design. At the Writers Guild he's been involved in numerous arbitrations, which are credit disputes arising when more than one writer works on a particular project. Schrader only writes what interests him and what interests him is writing from within: personal movies. He has been offered large sums to do adaptations and re-writes but refuses.

What was your screenplay like?

It's a point of legitimate interest, what I had in mind, and what Steve [Spielberg] had in mind, but I want to make it very clear that nothing I'm about to say implies that I should have gotten credit on *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*. In fact, I wrote a letter to the

**by Mark
Patrick Carducci**

Writers Guild, telling them that I didn't feel I deserved any credit. I backed out of the arbitration.

Michael and Julia Philips, the producers of *TAXI DRIVER*, brought Steve and I together because he wanted to make a picture about a UFO Watergate called *WATCH THE SKIES*. They felt that my sensibility being extremely Germanic and moralistic, it was the proper counterpoint to Steve's sensibility. So I wrote a script called *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, which was a sort of metaphysical, updated version of the life of Saint Paul. It was about an Air Force debunker who goes around disproving UFO sightings, sending up balloons and getting guys to dress up in tin foil and wander onto the highway so they can get picked up by the cops. I called him Paul Van Owen. On the way to Damascus he has a close encounter. He sees a saucer. Subsequently the government puts him in charge of a secret project whose function is to make contact. He spends the rest of his life, thirty-odd years, trying to establish contact. Eventually he comes to realize that the aliens never really were "out there" but that they are in fact "up here." [Schrader taps his forehead] They live at an elevated consciousness. At the end of the picture he rendezvous with them and is able to leave the planet.

Steven wanted to make the film about a common man. That was my argument with him. Who the fuck wants to see that? This is supposed to be the greatest event in the history of Earth. At least make the character equal to the event. But Steve felt audiences wanted to see movies about ordinary people. Shakespeare's audiences went to see "Macbeth." The didn't want to see a play about the porter. But Steve wanted to make a movie about the porter, about a guy who would go off to Mars and start a chain of McDonalds. I just didn't care to write that script so Steve and I parted company. He took the original, strong character and started to break him apart. Paul Van Owen became Lacombe, Roy Neary and the Air Force Sergeant. Ultimately there were a bunch of other writers involved.

All uncredited.

You have to understand how Steve felt about *JAWS*. He was furious with Verna [Fields], [Richard] Zanuck and Peter Benchley. He felt they had all conspired to take away his credit. Everybody is very much in the background, including me. I have no desire to tread on him.

Who were the other writers?

Walter Hill wrote on it. I know Jerry Belson wrote on it. Hal Barwood and Mat Robbins. David Giler. A lot of people. I think John Milius did something. But it is Steven's film. And in foregoing the arbitration I also forewent my points in the picture.

Do you regret that now?

No. I'm happy to live on the money I deserve. The only thing I deserve credit for is changing Steve's mind about doing the film as a UFO Watergate. I thought it ought to be about a spiritual kind of encounter. That idea stayed and germinated. The notion of the sky tones, the phonic loop, that was also mine. One of the worst things in the film is the last idea I had before I left. I had one character who

sees something in his mind and tries to re-create it in his living room. It was like a Zen garden. I'm almost embarrassed to say I had that idea, it's so terrible.

Were complex special effects called for in your script, and was it also to be a large canvas film?

It had to be. The structure of the film was what I loved. The ending especially. You see, the movie opened up with a white screen. A scalpel comes in and slices. And blood drips out. A wire comes in, an electrode. It gets implanted under the skin. Throughout the movie the main character is on an operating table and you cut back to him. His brain is being cut open. He's conscious. Local anaesthetic. They're opening him up, putting all this shit in, making him into a bionic person. At the end of the movie, when it picks up in real time, you know he's wiring himself. You know he's going to leave. Under the landing sight they have all these computer banks, read-outs, scan scopes and things. Every sensor is tied into him so they know exactly what he's seeing and feeling at any given moment. And just before the saucer lands, he goes back to all the people he's worked with for the past thirty years and embraces them all. They are all crying. He's feeling wonderful because he's finally going. The saucer comes. He greets it and enters. The last thing that happens as the saucer leaves is that one of the technicians reading all the screens says, "He's still alive." You see the saucer's light diminishing in the sky as he leaves to be the first person to participate in this new world. You also have the feeling that we sent the perfect man, a man who lived his life for this moment, whose heaven was in fact going to another world. I guess it scared Steve. He felt much more comfortable with an ordinary man.

Did you show the aliens?

No. I didn't think you could. But all due credit to Steve, I think he got away with it. I know my heart started to beat faster when the cute little aliens came out. I thought they were sort of sexy.

Were you specific about the appearance of the saucer?

I didn't feel that was my job as a writer. In the film they chose to go with a city effect, like a floating Manhattan. I just described it as a huge, saucer-shaped vehicle. I had one scene set on a knoll. You walk up to it. You're standing at the base of the knoll. The sky starts to turn red. Van Owen is all alone. Then, from below the knoll, a red dome, a sun starts to rise. The saucer has been below the knoll and is making its appearance by moving upwards. But that's as specific as I ever got.

Schrader is now directing. His first feature, an emotionally turbulent story of survival in the work-a-day world, *BLUE COLLAR*, ought to alter a few preconceptions about exactly what constitutes a Paul Schrader film. Anyone who has seen *TAXI DRIVER* knows perhaps more than he would like about what goes on in Schrader's head. One awaits with curiosity, eagerness, and not just a little good old-fashioned, healthy anxiety, the *successful mating* of his "Germanic, moralistic sensibility" with the science fiction, fantasy or horror genre. □

ALIEN is being produced by Gordon Carroll, David Giler and Walter Hill for their Brandywine Productions, for distribution by 20th Century-Fox. The script was written by Dan O'Bannon, based on an original story by O'Bannon and executive producer Ronald Shusett. O'Bannon is best known for his work on the cult film DARK STAR and for production design on the aborted DUNE project. Set to direct ALIEN is Ridley Scott, whose first feature was the exquisitely executed costume drama THE DUELLISTS, a big hit at Cannes last year. Although ALIEN has been under consideration for nearly two years, its recent production start is another example of the major's push for quality science fiction product.

O'Bannon gave us details about the project as he was leaving for London to begin work with underground cartoonist and fantasy illustrator Ron Cobb, Swiss artist H. R. Giger and French artist Jean Giraud on the film's production design. Giraud is best known for his work as "Moebius" in *Heavy Metal*, and he worked with O'Bannon previously on DUNE.

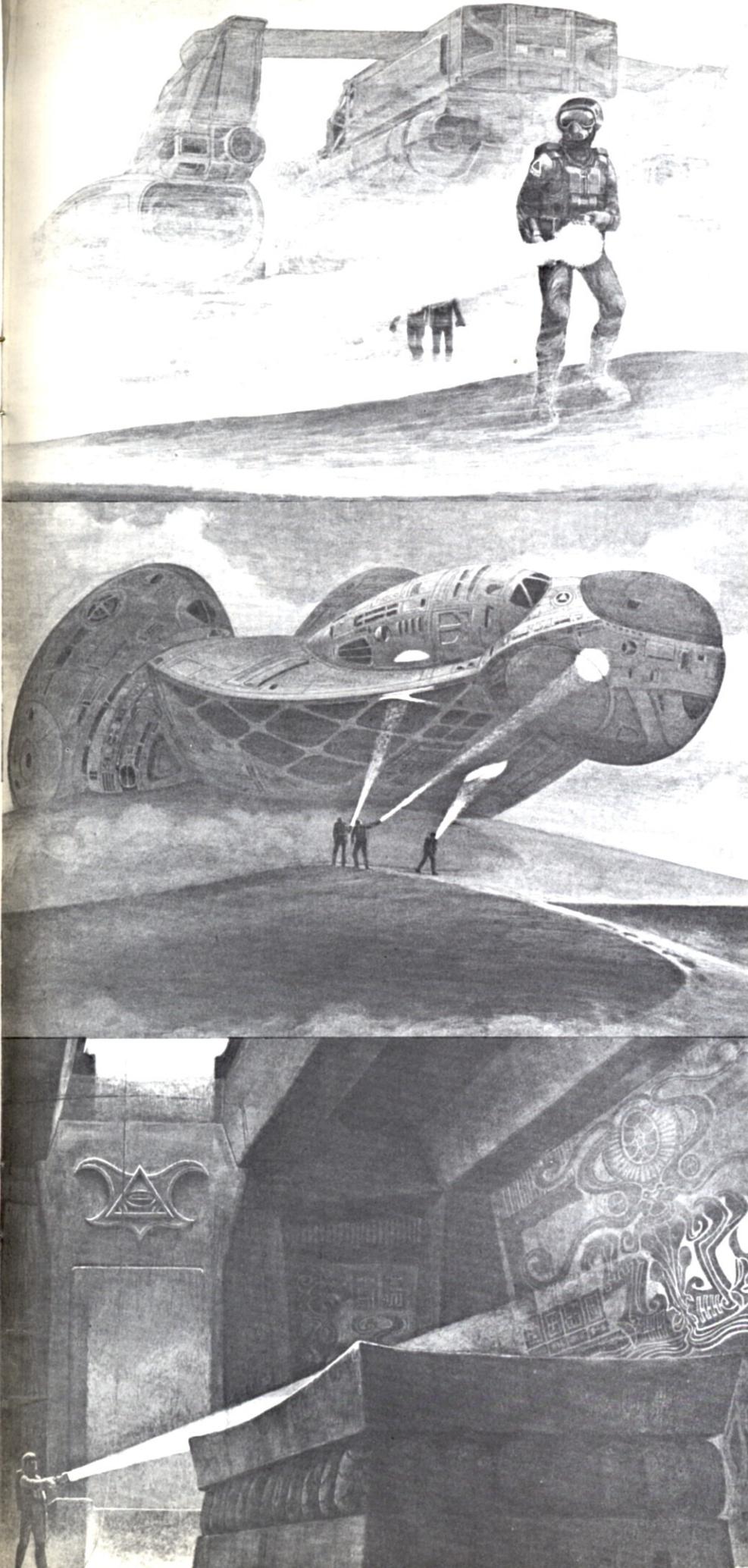
"ALIEN is like a gothic horror film set in space," says O'Bannon. "I was fascinated and excited with the device of having some form of uncontrollable monstrosity loose on board a space vessel. The thing is breaking down every barrier the crew puts up, and nothing can kill it. There's nowhere to run, once they reach the opposite end of the ship. I like the concept of a newly-discovered planet where the human explorers (read invaders) uncover a form of life which is different. Their misinterpretation of this alien leads to most of the problems."

The film sounds amazingly like IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND SPACE, a taut little B-picture written by Jerome Bixby in 1958. And O'Bannon originally conceived of ALIEN as a low-budget film. "My first script was meant to be produced for no more than a half million dollars. With the money Fox has put up, it seems that now they might have *too much* money." As with KING KONG and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND, Fox executives and Carroll have visualized the pivotal alien as a full-sized mechanical creation, manipulated via hydraulic tubes and onstage audio controls. Says O'Bannon, who will be supervising the film's special effects: "The whole trend away from stop-motion animation is a step backwards. Producers are always worried about strobe problems, but they don't realize the strobe doesn't matter. There is more character in stop-motion, the likes of which cannot be found in bulky mansized models."

With Ronald Shusett, O'Bannon is also preparing an adaptation of the Philip Dick short story "I Can Remember It For You Wholesale" as a film titled TOTAL RECALL. The story will be expanded and fleshed-out to feature length. □

Scientists explore a derelict alien ship and an ancient monument, near their landing site in ALIEN, pre-production paintings by Ron Cobb. [Photos by Jerry Wolfe, © 1978 Dan O'Bannon]

by Jeffrey Frentzen
and Tim Wohlgemuth



CANNED PERFORMANCE

Enthusiastic, energetic, 22 year-old Hoyt Yeatman may be setting some sort of speed record for entry into the realm of visual effects. The springboard for his rapid rise is a 7 minute student film made at UCLA called CANNED PERFORMANCE, a dimensional animation/live action short which spanned 1½ years in production and which in some ways compares favorably with professional films of the genre. It has already netted him work on an educational short, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (he has screen credit), and on the currently running LAUGH IN television specials, for which he combined live action film with cel animation by *Mad* magazine margin cartoonist Sergio Aragones. He and Aragones plan to collaborate on future projects.

Interestingly, Hoyt did not become a dimensional animator upon seeing 1933's KING KONG or THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD. It seems that his brother had a plastic Gumby toy, and on the package back was an offer for information on how to do dimensional animation. Hoyt sent away for it, commandeered the family regular 8mm Keystone and hasn't slowed down since. It was later, however, that he became interested in combining live action with animation. Remarkably, CANNED PERFORMANCE is only his second attempt at it.

The film begins in the desert (the ever popular Vasquez Rocks, California). A disheveled, exhausted prospector (John Tlemmons), his canteen dry, collapses in the dust. Nearby, a can of Coca-Cola suddenly materializes in a crackling electric

Steven S. Wilson works on educational films, specializing in dimensional animation and visual effects. His thesis "Puppet Animation Combined With Live Action In Feature Films," done at USC, is now being updated for book publication by A. S. Barnes.

by S. S. Wilson



Hoyt Yeatman

as the thrown objects (which transfer from live actor to animated monster via substitution of color-matched miniatures); close physical contact between monster and actor; and the related front projection trickery necessary to complete the illusions.

Hoyt was prevailed upon by his professor to expand the test into a complete film. Dramatically, it does not entirely escape its test film origins, but it is nonetheless delightful, and the unexpected "Singin' In The Rain" sequence often reduces fantasy film fans to hysterics. The idea for that particular bit came out of an animation storyboarding class and at first Hoyt resisted it as too difficult, but later he decided it was a worthy challenge.

The monster is the result of his first attempts at clay sculpture, foam rubber casting, and armature construction. He spent two weeks on the armature, working with odds and ends culled in surplus stores. Having only hand tools, he laboriously bored shaft holes in ball bearings (after blow torch annealing) with vice grip and electric hand drill.

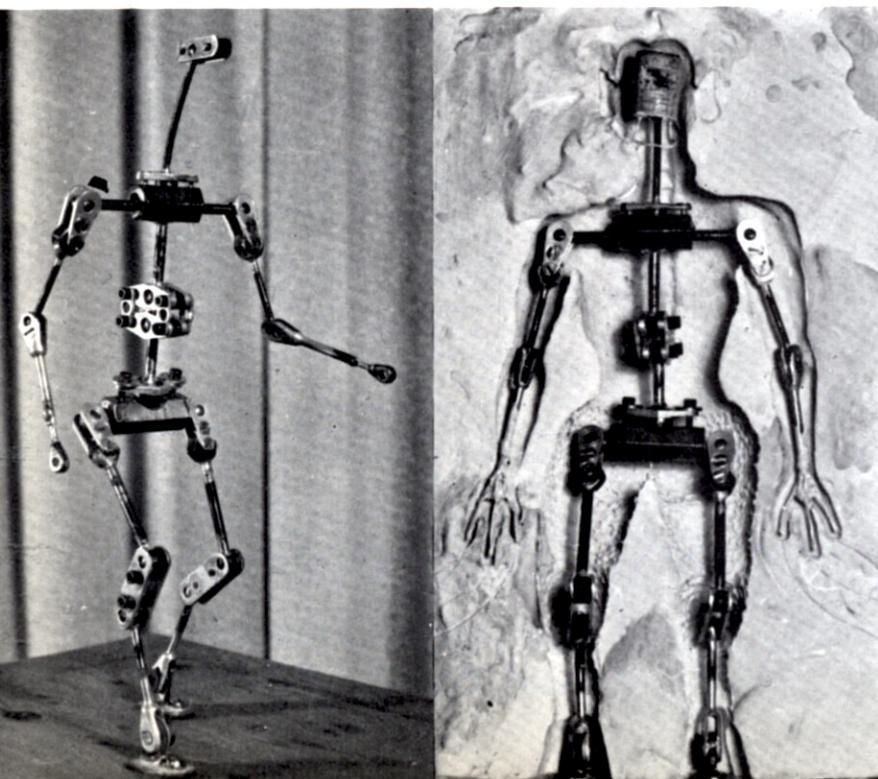
The armature functioned well enough, but it wasn't perfect. One arm eventually became too weak to hold up the top hat, so during animation it had to be supported with fine wire (.002 in.). To reduce reflection from the wire, Hoyt etched it with acid. He says, "If you spray it with duller, it makes it thicker, but etching it makes it even thinner."

In terms of animation, the dance sequence was the most difficult. Hoyt can still quote the number of frames from memory: 2414. After editing the Gene Kelley sound track down to 1½ minutes, Hoyt filmed dancer Raoulette Woods, who choreographed the number, from three angles, using a synchronized camera, so that he could study the motion in three dimensions in order to work out his animation. The sequence required an entire summer to complete.

The film's most noticeable defect crops up during the dance; the background plate image loses registration, that

blue haze (achieved by filming strobe lit glitter falling behind rotoscoped mattes). When the man reaches for the can, it begins changing shape (replacement animation) and spews more sparkling mist from which emerges a 20 foot monster reminiscent of Harryhausen's Cyclops. The prospector battles it, throwing his hatchet at it, knifing it, and throwing rocks; but in the end it catches him, places him up on a rock shelf, and subjects him to its performance of "Singin' In The Rain" (painstakingly lip-synched to the Gene Kelly version). With top hat and cane, it dances, flicks its forked tongue between verses, blinks its beady eyes, and swats the poor prospector down with its cane (in time with the music) when he tries to sneak away. The final shot shows a crowd of soft drink cans applauding the show.

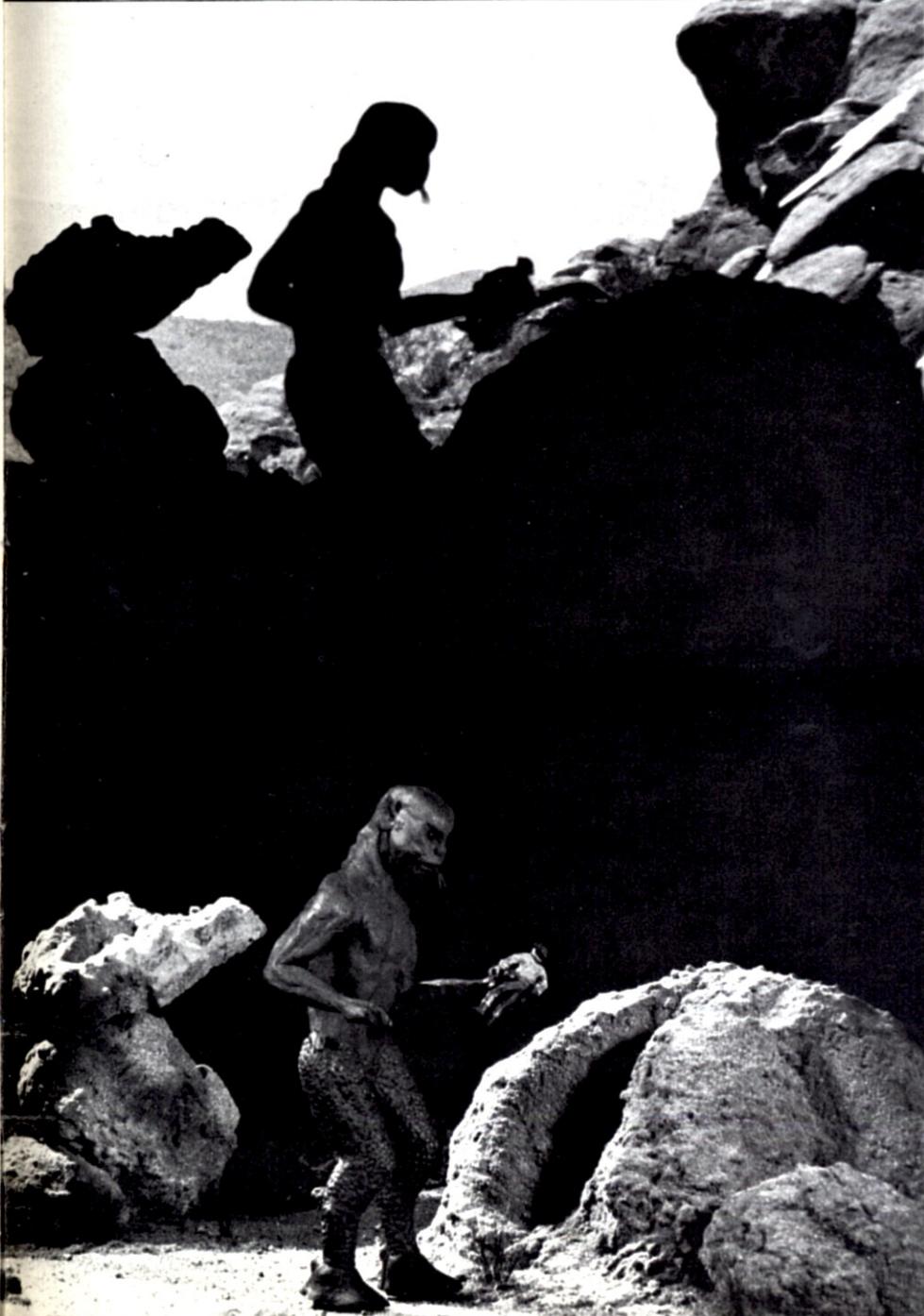
Originally, the film was conceived as a test which Hoyt would use as a vehicle for learning the techniques employed. Hence it includes such "classic" elements



Top: In Hoyt Yeatman's CANNED PERFORMANCE, a Cyclops-like monster abducts a prospector and forces him to view its song-and-dance rendition of "Singin' In The Rain." Middle: The miniature, front-projection set-up, monster in foreground miniature set, set lights off, front-projection on. Bottom: The set-up shown above with set lights on, front projection off.

Left: The armature for the monster, pieced together from a variety of surplus store items. Middle: Armature inside one half of plaster cast, prior to foam rubber casting. Right: The monster, in clay, prior to casting in plaster.

CANNED PERFORMANCE



is, it jiggles with respect to the monster and foreground miniature set. This problem stems primarily from the economic necessity of having to work with 16mm film. Even with the best equipment, 16mm registration simply isn't as good as that obtainable with 35mm film; and the fact that the film itself is so much smaller means that any registration anomaly is proportionately magnified.

Furthermore, the problem is more obvious in the dance sequence because there is the fixed foreground miniature set to which the eye can visually compare image shift. In most of the other composite shots, the monster is the only non-original element, and since it is also moving, plate image movement is less noticeable.

The sequence presented additional problems. In order to match the lighting intensity on the foreground set, Hoyt found it necessary to use less neutral filtration on the background plate projector. This meant that more heat from the projection lamp reached the film plane, affecting both the film and the tiny 16mm registration pins. As it was, before he could begin work each day, he had to let his equipment warm up for a full hour because his registration tests showed that heat expansion of the registration pins slowly shifted the image away from its "cold start" position.

Finally, Hoyt traced some of the registration problem to minor projector focus changes he made. Rotating the lens to focus it altered the relationship between its optical center and the rest of the projector optics, and this, too, affected the projected image position. Rather than spend too much time re-shooting, Hoyt elected to get the film finished, and apply the lessons learned to future projects.

Animation of the monster is not as fluid as that done by more experienced animators, but it is quite good by amateur standards. It exhibits such subtleties as "follow through" when the monster swings its arms, for example. Also, there is a great deal of precise interaction between monster and live actor (as when the man stabs the monster); animation of this type is very difficult to plan and execute.

Generally, Hoyt's work is excellent. His sparkling haze effect is as clean as the *STAR TREK* transporter beam on which it is modeled. His split screen mattes are imperceptible throughout the film. Most impressive, however, is the consistent high quality of his matching of the monster's perspective, lighting, and contrast to that in the background plates.

Rephotographing a plate in either rear or front projection is a complex process at best, and Hoyt's task was further complicated by the fact that he had to project original reversal film, instead of a print made from original negative (which is the normal 35mm procedure). A print in 16mm would build up too much grain and contrast as compared with the monster when the two were photographed together. So Hoyt opted to project original (Ektachrome Commercial), but this required that his live action photography had to be exactly right, since there would be no printing step in which to make minor or exposure or color corrections.

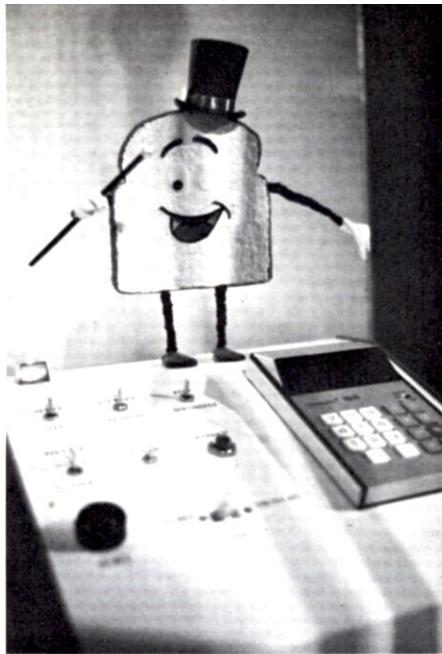
Extensive testing was necessary to ascertain the best exposure and filter com-

CANNED PERFORMANCE

binations, and the end result is a credit to Hoyt's perserverance. In fact, he overcame one mysterious color problem which he did not solve until later. The orange-painted walls of the dormitory typing room in which he worked added reflected orange light to his screen image, and he constantly had to filter it out. He identified the source of the orange when he began work on his animation sequence for the Churchill film, WORDS, and he then tar-papered the walls of the room. The sequence ought to startle educational film audiences; it features a dimensional, Kong-like gorilla (built by fellow student, Brian Chin, who also built a tyrannosaurus on LAUGH IN). The gorilla chases a little girl, picks her up (in a flawless on-screen switch from live actress to puppet substitute), kisses her, and sets her down. Again, the composite blending is superb, and even the registration is improved, for Hoyt had further refined his projector by this time.

Except for UCLA's 16mm Mitchell camera, used for both live action and animation, Hoyt designed and built all of the equipment used on CANNED PERFORMANCE, including the camera animation motor. Even though he had to scrounge parts and cut corners, the sophistication of his equipment has raised quite a few professional eyebrows. It was used for all the LAUGH IN film/animation composites.

The master control unit is completely self-contained in a 70 lb metal-bound carrying case. It includes a constant-voltage transformer which maintains even power for lighting regardless of line voltage fluctuations. Also built-in are two blowers (from vacuum cleaners) which, through detachable hoses, cool the projector lamp house and film plane. There is a main vari-ac for varying the intensity of the projector lamp and a second vari-ac set for a lower, "working," intensity. Hoyt theorized that it was unnecessary to run the projector lamp at full intensity except when actually exposing a camera frame. The rest of the time, it just sub-



The camera control unit built for CANNED PERFORMANCE. The Bread character is from a LAUGH IN sequence.

jects the film and the filter gels to unwanted heat. So, he keeps the lamp dim while he is animating, maintaining an image just bright enough to work with. Professional opinion held that this system might cause flickering if lamp intensity varied from frame to frame, but thus far it has worked very well. Furthermore, it allowed Hoyt to dispense with the film plane cooling blower which was causing dust to accumulate on the film.

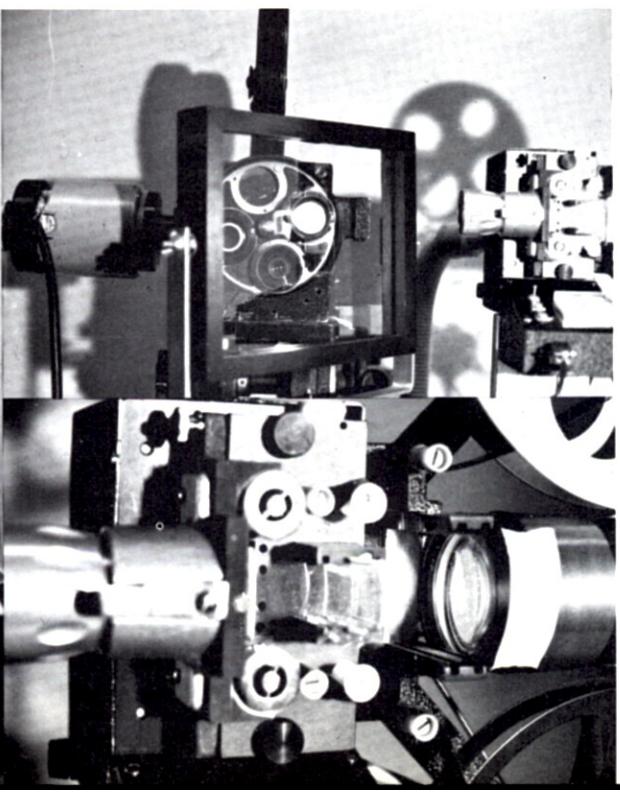
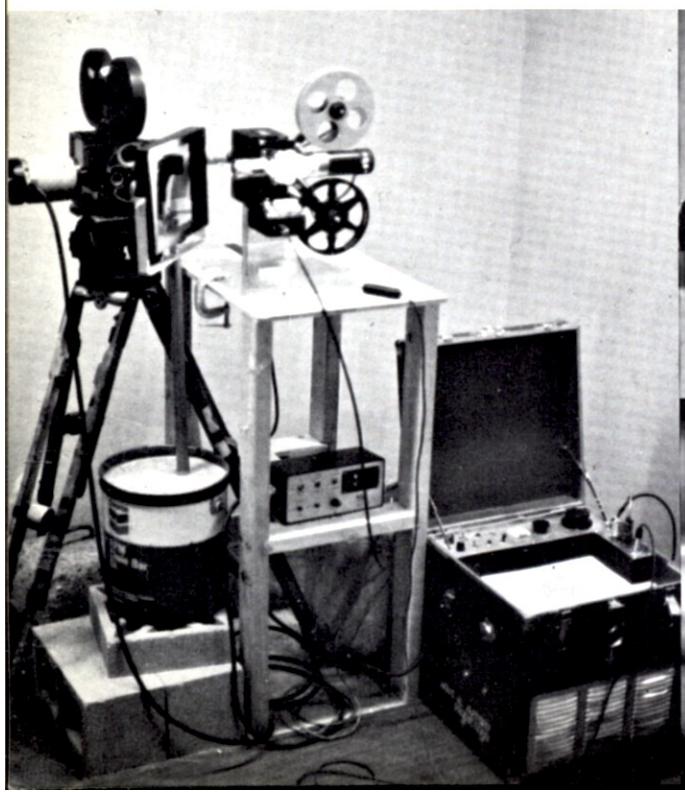
In addition to the master control there is a remote camera control which allows the camera to be run forward or backward, sounds a horn when a frame is taken, and keeps a frame count on a re-wired \$8.95 pocket calculator (Hoyt couldn't afford an expensive standard electromagnetic counter). He protected the calculator with a battery back-up so that it does not lose the count even if all electrical power fails.

When the camera controls are set, everything may be triggered with a hand button on a long cable, attached to the animator's belt. When the button is pushed, a sequencer (from a coffee machine) automatically brings the projector to full printing power, fires the camera shutter, advances both camera and projector to the next frame and switches the projector back to working power. The unit may also be put on full automatic and left on its own to photograph any preset number of frames entered on the calculator, a useful feature for photographing a portion of a split screen for which there is no animation to be done.

Often, the visual effects artist works in a dingy, cluttered studio calling to mind an alchemist's laboratory, using formless weatherbeaten machines covered with gaffer's tape. However romantic such an atmosphere may be to worshipping fans, it is just as likely to be unnerving to money-minded producers. Hoyt is aware of this, and while function is primary in all of his design, his equipment also looks impressive, particularly the 35mm equipment which he is now building. His newest camera control unit performs more functions than the old one and looks like a section of HAL 9000. It provides nearly unlimited shutter speeds, a time lapse function, and sports such refinements as foolproof switch covers and indicator lights which can be dimmed when working under low light conditions.

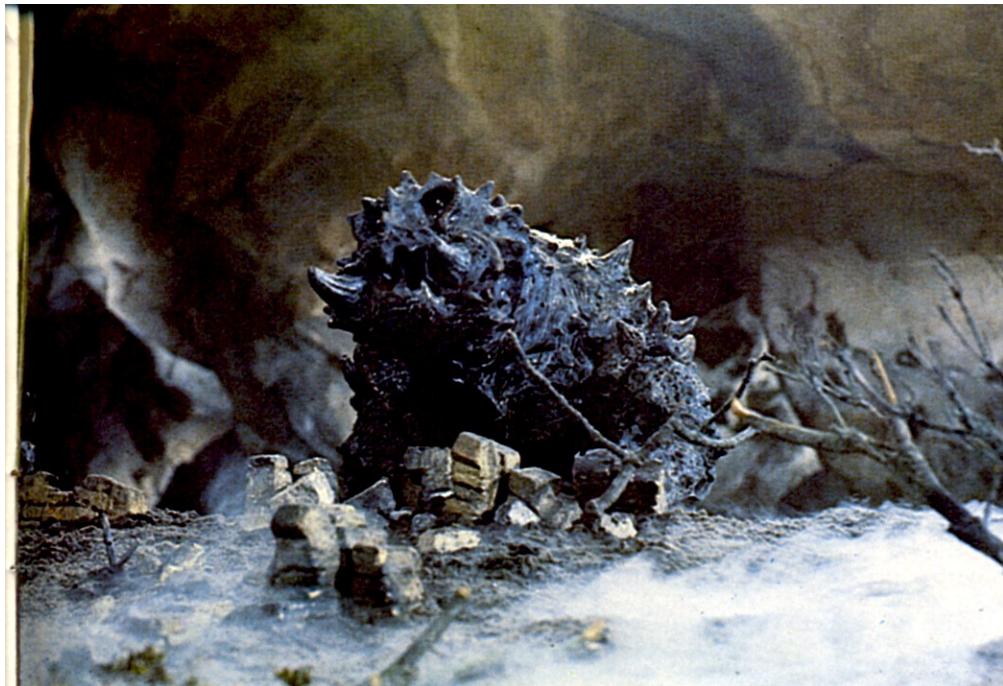
With the LAUGH IN specials complete, what is Hoyt doing now? Well, in addition to working on his own equipment, he has been approached by no less than four professional dimensional animators about designing and building animation controls and/or working on visual effects. Currently, he is working at Robert Abel's state-of-the-art effects house and will probably be involved with that company's effects for the new STAR TREK feature.

Does Hoyt ever do anything else? "Yeah, I play bassoon and stuff like that."



Left: Hoyt Yeatman's front projection set-up used in filming CANNED PERFORMANCE. Note that beam splitter is mounted in drum with 180 lbs of concrete to prevent vibration from affecting image. Camera tripod and projector stand are weighted with large concrete blocks (partially visible). Master control unit is built into a large case on floor at right. Top: Closeup of the front projection complex. The projector, built by Yeatman using a J&K printer head, is on the right; the beam splitter is in the rectangular frame between projector and camera. Note bright spot of reflected projector beam (center of photo) precisely superimposed over camera taking lens. Yeatman also built animation motor (left of camera) for 16mm Mitchell. Bottom: Closeup of J&K printer head in projector. Filter gels are in slots near center of photo.

7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS



Individual Pictures Ltd. is the banner under which the latest Kevin Connor/John Dark production, *7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS*, is being made. The film is scheduled for release this summer by EMI in Britain and Columbia Pictures in the United States. Producer John Dark and director Kevin Connor, previously under the Amicus banner, produced the Edgar Rice Burroughs adaptations, *THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT* (1975), *AT THE EARTH'S CORE* (1976) and *THE PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT* (1977), all for American-International Pictures. The new production follows the same formula but omits the royalty to Burroughs. The Brian Hayles script is based on "original" ideas by Connor. Scripter Hayles has been responsible for many episodes of the long running British TV series *DR. WHO*, and is currently working on John Dark's next project, an as yet untitled Arabian Nights fantasy.

7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS tells of a search for the legendary lost city by Professor Aitken and his son Charles. They find themselves in the clutches of a giant octopus, the guardian of the entrance of Atlantis, when they dive into the depths in a submersible observatory. Washed up on the shores of the lost civilization, descendants from a meteor which collided with Earth in prehistoric times, they find themselves caught between the choice of joining the elite intellectuals of Atlantis and helping to change the destiny of the world, or fighting the many horrors and monsters which block the way back to their own world.

For the first time, Dark and Connor employed a casting director, Alan Foenander, an ex-J. Walter Thompson man who is reckoned to have seen about every face in the world, because they were worried that their own choice of actors would start to become a little stale. Nevertheless, Doug McClure and Shane Rimmer are back again anyway, for the fourth and second time respectively. Daniel Massey plays the part of Atraxon, the leader of Atlantis, a role originally intended for Peter Cushing whose hectic post-*STAR WARS* schedule prevented him from doing it. Also cast are Peter Gilmore from television's *THE ONEDIN LINE*, Michael Gothard (*THE DEVILS* and *SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN*), John Ratzenberger and Hal Galili, both on view in *VALENTINO*, and as the decorative female, it's the turn of relative unknown

Miniature work involving the monsters featured in 7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS, to be released as WARLORDS OF THE DEEP this summer. Top: A Zaarg, a monster mutation of Atlantis. Middle: A giant octopus approaches the ocean explorer Texas Rose to launch a major attack. Bottom: A Mogdaan rises out of the mists of Atlantis. The miniature creatures, about three feet in size, were designed by sculptor Roger Dicken, and operated mechanically by special effects supervisor John Richardson.

Mike Childs and Alan Jones are our London-based correspondents.

by Mike Childs and
Alan Jones

7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS

Lea Brodie, who plays Delphine. A casting coup was signing Cyd Charisse to star as the High Priestess Atsil, her first film since MAROC 7.

Our major stop the day we visited Pinewood Studios was at the workshop of special effects technician John Richardson, the son of Cliff Richardson, one of the foremost pioneers in screen explosions. John Richardson has recently done work on THE OMEN, A BRIDGE TOO FAR, SUPERMAN, and supervised the explosions on location in Spain for the previous Dark/Connor effort, THE PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT. Richardson is in complete control of special effects on 7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS, and we wondered how closely he worked with sculptor Roger Dicken, who designed all the monsters for the picture?

"In the initial conceptual stages, very closely," said Richardson. "We both were in on the early script stages of this film and we had a lot of discussion about the giant octopus—its size, how we would build it, etc. We operate as a team—there are no separate camps or deals—as my part and Roger's part have to match up completely. On location, Roger had his nine foot high, 60 foot tentacle-span octopus and my crew had to pull the wires and manipulate the poles."

Were there any special problems with the octopus model? "Lots. All the basic mechanics—how to make the tentacles curl-up, how to maneuver it around someone's very expensive boat without causing any damage, how to deal with the model when the sea is rough, keeping it from blowing off the boat in a heavy wind, but mainly where do you get compressed air when you are 100 yards from the Mediterranean shore?"

Was Richardson happy to be working again for John Dark and Kevin Connor? "They are possibly the most professional people I've worked with," he said. "They make the necessary decisions before the shooting day arrives and they spend the money where it's needed, and not on some well-known actor who wants two million dollars for his services. They get good actors and spend the rest in my

department. As a result, they get special effects that could cost four times as much if I was working on a film like SUPERMAN, which believe me is a whole different ball game. Take KING KONG for the best example of that."

What had Richardson found most challenging about his work on the film? "On A BRIDGE TOO FAR I had a team of 26 people and a budget where the sky was the limit. The challenge there was one of organization. How do you put 22 tons of hardware on a landscape for one shot on a Sunday morning. Figuring out how to do it was no problem. It was just an immense task. That's been the biggest picture I've worked on to date. On 7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS, the reverse is the case. I'm concerned with budgeting my time to get something ready and in full working order so that it will work the first time it's needed."

What aspect of special effects gives Richardson the most pleasure? "Blowing things up," he said without hesitation, "any explosive work. For eliciting an immediate audience reaction you can't beat an explosion, even though they are simpler to execute than, say, a rubber octopus." Richardson went on to explain some of his more interesting effects work in THE OMEN, which he pointed out had a lower budget than his current assignment. "We built mechanical dogs for the scenes where Gregory Peck gets attacked in the graveyard. The models involved months and months of headaches and problems, but they were so real that nobody noticed! The easy scene was the decapitation by the sheet of glass and everybody comments on that." Richardson passed-up an assignment on DAMIEN—THE OMEN II because of other commitments and the fact that it was an American-based production.

When we expressed misgivings about the juvenile quality of past Dark/Connor productions, Richardson replied, "But if more of your readers did go and see this sort of film then they would be made much bigger and better." Bigger perhaps, but in choosing to go with mechanical monsters and men in suits, the Dark/

Special effects technician John Richardson rigs Lea Brodie in the clutches of the giant octopus.



Top: Roger Dicken readies the miniature giant octopus. Dicken worked with Jim Danforth on WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH. Middle: The Guardian of the Gates of Atlantis, a mechanical miniature for rear screen projection. Special effects supervisor John Richardson touches up a Zaarg miniature.

Connor productions aim squarely at the sub-teen market. Adult audiences won't sit still for such obvious fakery.

We left Richardson at work to visit two of the sets in use and talk with director Kevin Connor. The set representing the Inner Sanctum of Atlantis is all inverted triangles and obelisks, surrounding a smoke-filled pit. But most impressive was a large swamp set, taking up nearly the whole of the sound stage used more recently for the moonscape in SUPERMAN. A log bridge a la KING KONG traverses the swamp, containing a huge rubber snapper fish. Jungle foliage lies on one side and on the other is a distant perspective of Atlantis on a hill. Behind all of this is a huge screen on which Roger Dicken's monster Zaargs will be rear-projected and filmed with the live action.

We asked director Kevin Connor what he was trying to achieve with 7 CITIES TO ATLANTIS? "Hopefully your magazine will note the more intelligent script," he replied, "because that's what I'm trying to do with this film, put more comment and content into it. For example, the scene we are shooting now, involving the silver helmet with which the wearer perceives holographic images of the future. In the film this will show Hitler, the Atomic bomb, the Moon landing and other historical events to make the audience aware of the folly of mankind in its broadest sense. The film is set at the time of the Industrial Revolution because I wanted to show what the scientific discoveries would eventually lead us to in terms of war and technology. The storyline is much more credible. We explain a lot of strange phenomena in the plot, like the Bermuda Triangle and the disappearance of the Marie Celeste. We've also included all the known data on Atlantis itself."

Commenting on using Doug McClure for his fourth film in a row, Connor said, "We have the right image and the audience accepts it. Because I've worked so closely with the technical side before, on this film I've left them very much to themselves and have concentrated on the actors. I thought I'd be more than a bit daunted by someone like Cyd Charisse, but she is great, a true Hollywood professional. I can't go on justifying myself about this sort of film. I do my best with first class actors. It's a simple as that."

We put one final question to producer John Dark. What sort of effect did he feel STAR WARS would have on a film like this? "Any film that gets people back in the cinemas is welcome," he said confidently. "If it's in the field one is working in, so much the better. I'm not worried about it at all. It's like saying that TV's MAN FROM ATLANTIS will affect the returns at the boxoffice. In reality, it gets the name of Atlantis mentioned and in fact will coax more people to the cinema. I'm not worried by a film like STAR WARS at all." □

CINEFANTASTIQUE

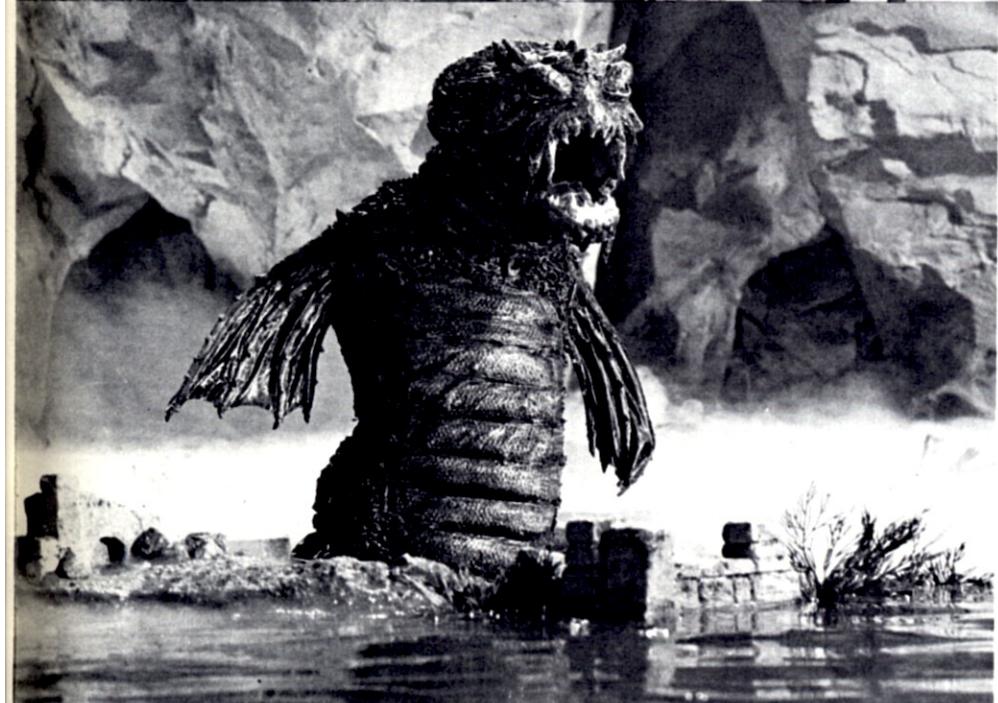
What, you may be asking, is this issue doing smack in the middle of a science fiction film boom? Simply this: honoring Hans J. Salter, one of the key creative contributors to the period of classic Universal horror films in the 1940s, because his work is long overdue this recognition, and because this is *CINEFANTASTIQUE* (sin-eh-fawn-toss-teen), the review of horror, fantasy and science fiction films—we cover it all!

Besides, the science fiction film boom is going nowhere fast, and is getting to be downright boring. If we date the current craze from *LOGAN'S RUN* (and note what a colossal disappointment got it all started), we see that the so-called trend in science fiction films has degenerated into an empty exercise in special visual effects. Unique, innovative, daring efforts in the genre don't spark booms, some of them don't even make money: *FAHRENHEIT 451* (1966), *2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY* (1968), *COLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT* (1970), *THX-1138* (1971), *DARK STAR* (1974). But since when has financial success been a hallmark of artistic achievement? Only since fans began quoting the boxoffice receipts of *STAR WARS*, I guess.

I had placed high hopes on *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND* to save us from an endless stream of *FLASH GORDON* retreads, but Spielberg's hollow *paean* to 2001 turned-out to be mostly old-hat, a null influence that might possibly even reinforce Hollywood's zany idea that special effects are science fiction. And I'm afraid it's only dark days ahead. The next big firecracker in the science fiction film boom pops-off at Christmastime, *SUPERMAN*, and it's based on a comic book for christ'sake!

So the die is cast; we'll be witnessing swashbuckling heroics in outer space until it ceases to be as profitable as minting gold, and that could be as soon as the first producer gets zilch back for his \$25 million budget. That could be fairly soon judging from the quality we've been seeing and how fast novelty wears-off a fickle public.

Fortunately, intelligent, quality science fiction films continue to be made despite trends. One of the finest I've ever seen will be opening widely this summer, *CAPRICORN ONE*, written and directed by Peter Hyams, from Warner Bros. Its story of the first manned-flight to Mars remains determinedly Earthbound, and there's hardly a special visual effect in sight, but Hyams makes it gripping from start to finish with basics like a literate screenplay, crisp dialogue, believable characters you give a damn about, taut direction and some edge-of-your-seat action sequences that will have audiences cheering. There's a dizzying aerial dog-fight between helicopters and an old crop-duster (a beautiful Hitchcock reference) that for sheer thrills and excitement far outshines the space battle over the Death Star in *STAR WARS*. And while managing to portray the paranoia, pessimism and realities of the seventies, it delivers-up a true American hero, and hope. Like those five films mentioned above, what *CAPRICORN ONE* demonstrates is that good science fiction is about people, not comic-book figures like Luke Skywalker. □



PLANET OF DINOSAURS

Not very long ago, dimensional animation fans were bemoaning the apparent passing of an art form, or specifically, of the fantasy pictures with which it is usually associated in America. Now, however, there are more dimensional animation feature films in production than ever before in the history of filmmaking. Ray Harryhausen, Jim Danforth, and David Allen are all at work on separate films; and lo, from an unexpected corner comes *PLANET OF DINOSAURS*, done by a group of relative newcomers operating under the corporate heading of Cinema Dynamics.

The majority of the film's animation was performed by Douglas Beswick, now animating Jim Danforth's *TIMEGATE*. Beswick started out on the *GUMBY* and *DAVEY AND GOLIATH* animation TV series, and did animation for Wah Chang's shorts *DINOSAURS*, *THE TERRIBLE LIZARDS* [see 1:2:34] and *ALPHABET ROLL CALL*, release by AIMS-Cahill.

Much of Beswick's animation is very good. For example, he gives the tyrannosaurus a smooth, ponderous stride—not an easy thing to achieve with a stiff-jointed animation model which weighs only a few pounds. The models used in the film were fabricated by executive producer and special visual effects supervisor Stephen Czerkas.

Composite photography was supervised by James Aupperle, who built two projectors used in making the composites. Ideally, if one cannot rent one of these rather scarce machines, one has it built by professionals who specialize in constructing precision photographic/optical equipment. "We didn't have the money to spend on that," says Aupperle, "so I began learning the basics of putting together process projectors." Starting with an Acme optical printer head, he modified it for rear projection. It was not ideal for this purpose, so when an old RKO process projector became available, Aupperle purchased it for rear projection and reworked the Acme for front projection, for which it was better suited. With two projectors in operation then, Aupperle could do set-up work with one while Beswick animated in a finished set-up using the other. Lighting had to be done at different times, however, because the building which housed the studio did not have sufficient electrical power to light two composite set-ups simultaneously.

In general, the composites in the film are good, particularly when one considers that, except for a few shots he did for *FLESH GORDON*, Aupperle had little professional experience to draw on. The composites are especially fresh and strik-

Facing Page, Top: A tyrannosaurus menaces a group of space travellers, crashed on a *PLANET OF DINOSAURS*. Compare to photo on the bottom of page 46 to detect the composite split. *Bottom:* A rear projection set-up with a foreground miniature set used in the film. This Page, Top: Pamela Bottaro and an animated spider. Note matte split along her leg. Middle: Bottaro and Charlotte Speer in a composite using Jim Danforth's matte painting of a prehistoric cave. Bottom: Chuck Pennington spears a struthiomimus. Note excellent matching of the foreground miniature here.



by S. S. Wilson



PLANET OF DINOSAURS

ing in their design and composition. A consistent effort was made to broaden the scope of the projection composite technique originally developed by Ray Harryhausen. For example, one composite shows a dinosaur in the foreground and another one in the background (generally, animation models appear in only one "plane" of the image in any single shot because it is easier to work that way). In another shot, three men approach a cow-sized dinosaur, *polacanthus*, from all sides; two men distract it until the third clobbers the slow-witted brute on the head—a very well-designed and well-executed shot. For another sequence, Aupperle actually ran a split screen matte along the edge of a supine actress' leg, allowing a large animated spider to run right up her body.

There are flaws in some of the composites, but they are subtle enough to pass unnoticed by the average viewer, who is more likely to object to the film's more obvious shortcomings. The amateur cast is often a source of unintentional humor. The action sequences of producer/director James K. Shea are sometimes rather confused, lacking the editorial and directorial polish which complements similar sequences by more seasoned filmmakers. Finally, though the script by Ralph Lucas based on James Aupperle's story contains laudable elements, it is uneven and rough-hewn, having been written in a terrific rush in order to meet a production start deadline when plans to use a script by an established science fiction writer fell through.

PLANET OF DINOSAURS is not that elusive combination of excellence which fantasy filmgoers yearn for, but it certainly doesn't scrimp on animation effects. Furthermore, it showcases the talents of a new group of visual effects artists. There is every indication that they will be making more and better films in the future, provided, as always, that this one finds a distributor and makes money. □

continued from page 34

Rice best-seller before it hit the bookstores, seeing the potential for an excellent horror film. David Picker, then head of Paramount in early 1977, gave the go-ahead for a first draft of a screenplay based on the novel. Frank DeFelitta (AUDREY ROSE, THE SAVAGE IS LOOSE) was assigned to write a draft which was abandoned; "not quite what I wanted," recalls Sylbert. William Friedkin was interested in the property and wanted to direct, but was busy with several projects of his own.

Sylbert said some rock stars were interested in doing a film, not in the traditional style, but as "some kind of high camp." Mick Jagger and David Bowie both expressed desire to portray Louis, the quasi-homosexual vampire charter of Rice's story. "There is no doubt that either Jagger or Bowie could play the part," explained Sylbert, "as they are both good actors. But the material, I feel, should be done correctly, and in high taste. This film has the chance to become 'the one,' not just 'another one.' There is now an emergence of a revived interest in the vampire story on film. Not just *Dracula*, which is high camp, and doesn't deserve to be done again. Rice's story develops into a whole new appreciation of the vampiric existence; the sexual, Freudian aspects and the hitherto unobserved emotional trauma involved in accepting one's immortality as opposed to one's mortality." Sylbert was so unimpressed by DeFelitta's script he followed a gut feeling and asked Rice to adapt her own novel. In six weeks, she turned out a workable draft. "It needs work, but it's in a direction I'm pleased with," he said, "the screenplay is an exercise in serious passion. We will not play up the special effects."

Sylbert is able to offer a wide range of names he's contacted to direct: Nicholas Roeg, John Boorman, Ridley Scott. Roeg appears to be Sylbert's favorite. Under

consideration for the lead role is Jon Voight, while the character of the elder vampire may be consigned to Peter O'Toole, who is, according to Sylbert, "perfect for the role." Paramount has not officially put INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE on its roster, but reports indicate the budget will be between \$6-7 million and the film may be shot in London. Sylbert explained his interest in hiring a director who is visually-oriented: "I'd rather have someone who's not a specialist in the genre. I think it takes another kind of sensibility, a director who can do moves with a camera, and, as Roeg can, do a kind of fright that is compelling and artful." The major casting decision, that of the child-woman vampire Claudia, is unresolved. Although the character's age has been predictably upped from eight to "thirteen or fourteen" in Rice's script.

Jeffrey Frentzen

STAR WARS II Sans John Dykstra

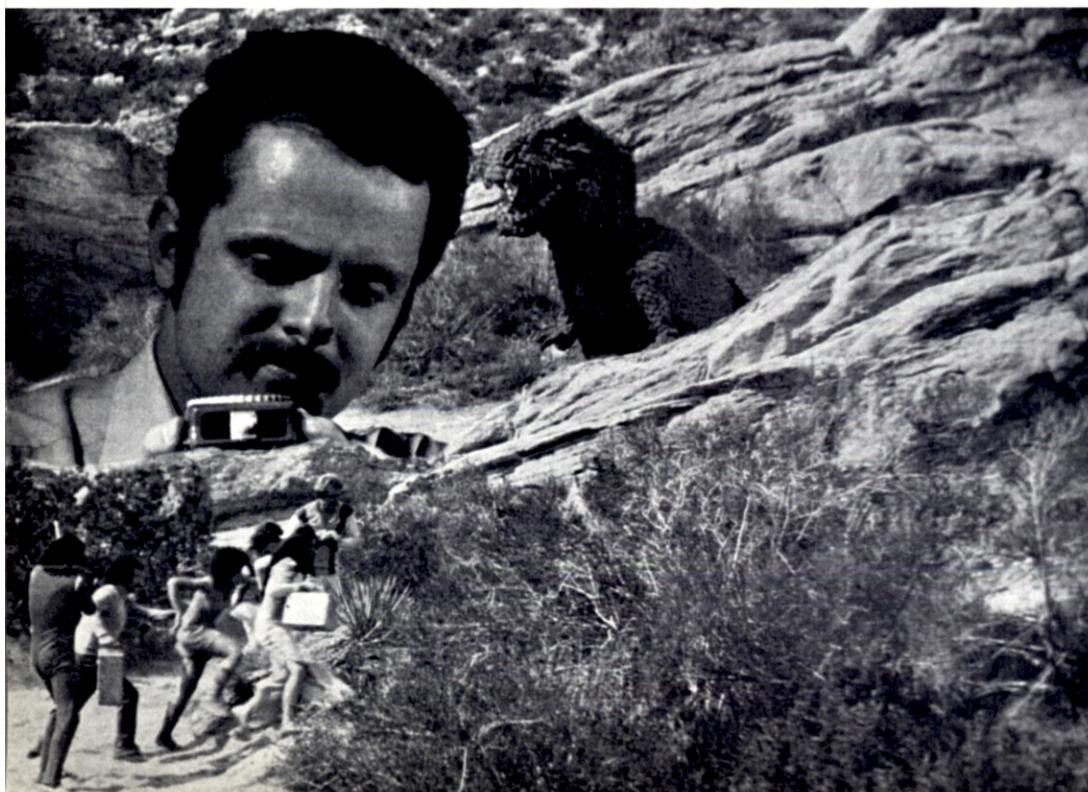
John Dykstra, the man behind ILM, Industrial Light and Magic, the facility responsible for the unprecedented special visual effects in STAR WARS, will not contribute to the effects work now being planned for the sequel. In a tersely worded press release dated February 23, Lucasfilm Ltd announced plans for the sequel—as yet untitled—but made no mention of special visual effects. However, it has been widely rumored that effects work on the film would be supervised by Brian Johnson of England, previously responsible for SPACE: 1999.

When reached for comment at MCA-TV, where he is currently producing GALACTICA, Dykstra confirmed the rumor, though no official announcement has yet been made by Lucasfilm Ltd. Dykstra declined to comment on the reasons for his absence on the sequel, however he is currently committed to work on GALACTICA (6:4/7:1:56), and is pursuing a career as producer.

It had been widely understood that George Lucas would not return to direct the sequel. Directing will be Irvin Kershner, who recently completed EYES OF LAURA MARS, an ESP film for Columbia, based on a screenplay by DARK STAR director John Carpenter. The sequel screenplay is by the late science fiction writer Leigh Brackett, who passed away March 18, shortly after turning in her script. Brackett was a veteran Hollywood screenwriter—THE BIG SLEEP, RIO BRAVO, etc.—and was married to science fiction writer Edmond Hamilton, who turned out many a space opera himself. Her only previous genre screenplay was for the 1945 Republic film THE VAMPIRE'S GHOST. Her screenplay is, per the Lucasfilm announcement "based on the second in a series of twelve stories from the 'Adventures of Luke Skywalker' by George Lucas." When quizzed about the Lucas stories, a representative of the Star Wars Corp, producers of the sequel, revealed they are merely early drafts of the original STAR WARS screenplay.

Producer Gary Kurtz' \$10 million dollar sequel, to be distributed by 20th Century Fox, will begin this summer on location in Europe and Africa starring Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford and Carrie Fisher.

James Aupperle takes a light-meter reading on a composite set-up.



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Without a doubt, I thought the issue on STAR WARS [6:4/7:1] was the most complete, accurate, and interesting publication concerning the production to date. Congratulations to Paul Mandell and the rest of the CFQ staff.

BEN BURTT
San Anselmo, California

[*Congratulations yourself, Ben, on coping that richly deserved Academy Award for the alien voices and sound effects of STAR WARS!*]

When we've arrived at the stage where movie acting, direction, and writing are ignored in favor of special effects, then we're in big trouble (as Ray Harryhausen has so consistently proved), and as much as I enjoyed STAR WARS, one has to admit that the critics of the film have some valid points. The picture's staunchest defenders seem to be those who know little or nothing of past efforts in the genre, and because of this ignorance, they cannot see the film for what it is—a cumulative result of all that has gone before. I've even heard STAR WARS described as "innovative," and I'm more than a little depressed to hear people expressing awe over what I immediately recognized—and appreciated, I might add—as a hyperthyroid FLASH GORDON serial. Technical effects do not determine the overall quality of a film.

ROY KINNARD
Chicago, Illinois

I'm sure you don't want the STAR WARS debate to go on forever, but your editorial attitude towards the picture is just too frustrating to let pass without comment. You are obstinately refusing to accept the film on its own terms. Lucas isn't coping out by denying that STAR WARS isn't science fiction [sic], he's simply stating a fact; he's not the one who's playing label games, you are, by pinning *your* label on *his* film and then criticizing him for not living up to it.

BRETT PIPER
5 Elm St, Derry NH 03038

[**Sigh* STAR WARS is science fiction. It's bad science fiction. Lucas, realizing full-well its relative quality in the field prefers to call it something else. I'm not playing with labels!*]

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